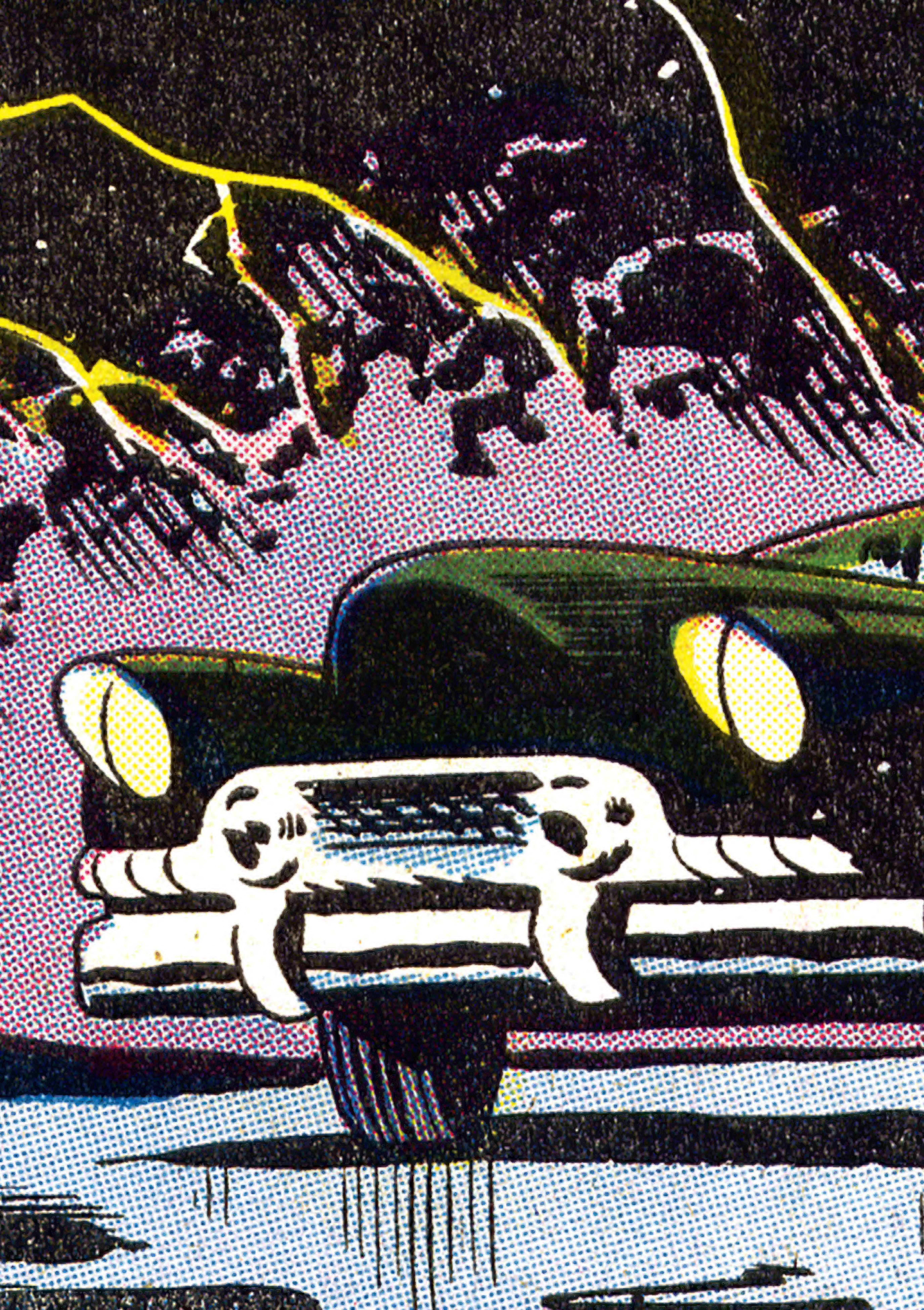




MYSTERIOUS TRAVELER

**THE
STEVE DITKO
ARCHIVES
VOL. 3**

**MYSTERIOUS
TRAVELER**



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STEVE DITKO
ARCHIVES
VOL. 3**

Edited by Blake Bell
Fantagraphics Books

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Above: Ditko in his studio shared with Eric Stanton, 1959.

INTRODUCTION

By Blake Bell

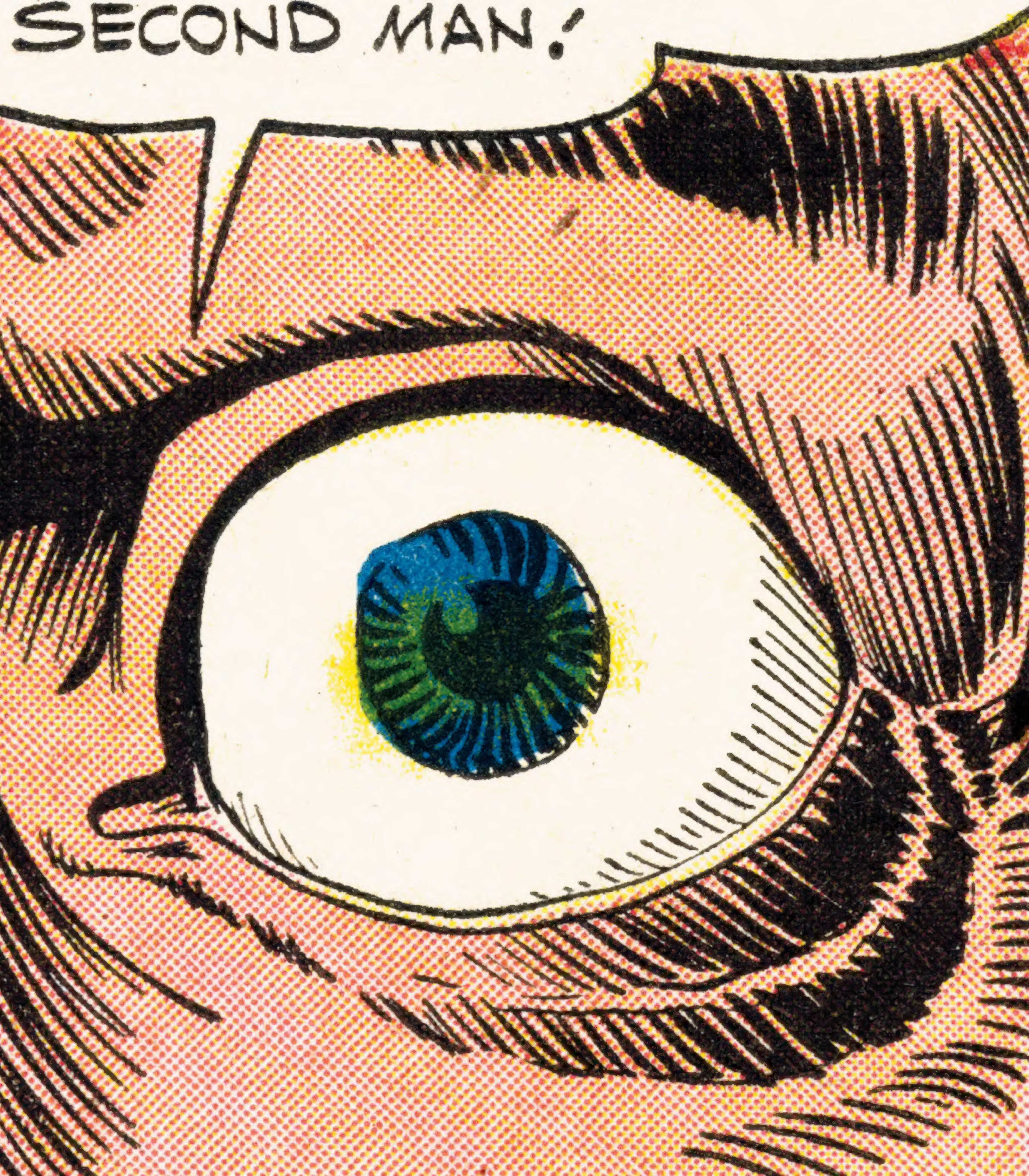
Hands outstretching wailing, fingers relentlessly pointing accusing, limbs akimbo flailing, eyes popping terrifying, foreheads sweating streaming, faces ragged weather-beaten, houses creaking haunting, drapery clothing billowing, winds swirling, shadows coming living, hearts beating pounding, POUNDING!

This book is haunted!

There is a fifth dimension beyond that which is known to man. It is a dimension as vast as space and timeless as infinity. It is the middle ground between light and shadow, between science and superstition, and it lies between the pit of man's fears and the summit of his knowledge. This is the dimension of imagination. It is an area we call the imagination of *Steve Ditko*!

Ditko is the original artist and co-creator of superheroes like the Amazing Spider-Man, Dr. Strange, The Creeper, Captain Atom and many more, but also so much more! In 1957, two years before *The Twilight Zone* made its debut on television, and five years before the first appearance of Spider-Man, Steve Ditko was ensconced at Charlton Comics, producing the art for a myriad of comic-book titles similar in design

ACCORDING TO THIS, THE GAD-
GET CAN TRANSFER ONE
MAN'S MIND INTO ANOTHER
MAN'S BODY! ALL YOU NEED
IS A PHOTO OF THE
SECOND MAN!



to the twist-ending, short morality plays that Rod Serling's seminal TV show made famous.

Mysterious Traveler: The Steve Ditko Archives Vol. 3 showcases Ditko's best work of the 1950s — many would argue the best work of his career. Comics like *Tales Of The Mysterious Traveler* and *This Magazine Is Haunted* either had their origins in, or drew their original inspirations from, the haunting, mysterious radio shows of the 1940s/'50s. The idea of a "host" in a comic was not new, but Ditko took to it and developed his most inspired layouts, his most beautifully-detailed and fluid narratives. And he did it at a prodigious pace. While many artists today claim exhaustion after 20 pages of pencilling a comic, Steve Ditko produced almost 500 pages of complete artwork (pencils and inks) plus 26 covers for Charlton Comics in 1957 alone — essentially 42 finished pages a month.

Producing his best work at his fastest pace for the least amount of money is what separates Steve Ditko from his entire peer group in the history of the medium.

But Steve Ditko's story has always been unique. Most comic-book creators were New York-based Jews. Ditko's story begins in Johnstown, PA — a small town as famous for its 1889 cataclysmic disaster as it is for being the birthplace of Spider-Man's co-creator.

The Johnstown flood of May 31, 1889 killed over 2,200 people. Eastern European immigrants from Austria and Poland were amongst those rebuilding the town; men with surnames like Witko, Datko, Sipko and Ditko.

Steve Ditko couldn't even escape disaster at birth. He grew up during the Great Depression, born in 1927 to working-class parents on Iron Street in Johnstown: his father (also named Stephen) a carpenter in a local steel mill, his mother (Anna) a home-maker and a seamstress. Along with his sisters Anna Marie and Betty, and his younger brother Patrick, Steve developed a love of comics in part because of his father's obsession with the *Prince Valiant* comic strip. For the father's Christmas present, mother and the children gathered the 52 *Prince Valiant* Sunday pages from that year's newspaper to be sewn together and bound with a cloth cover.

Ditko's love for comics exploded at the age of 12 with the advent of the Batman, with art by

Jerry Robinson, and with the debut of *The Spirit* newspaper strip, created by Will Eisner. Ditko so loved the Caped Crusader that he had his mother sew him a detailed Batman costume. Ditko and his brother would travel across town in the dead of winter to grab copies of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* that housed Eisner's newspaper supplement.

"I've been drawing ever since I was in high school and that adds up to a lot of hours days and years," wrote Ditko to a fan in the late 1950s. "The only catch is I didn't know what I was doing. I didn't have anyone to point out my mistakes and wound up with some very deep rooted bad habits. Jerry Robinson pulled me over a lot of the bad ones but I still find myself slipping into some of those old worn ruts. It's been a continual struggle."²

Jerry Robinson was able to pull Ditko out of those habits because he became Ditko's teacher in the early 1950s. "Private Steve Ditko" enlisted in the Army on October 26, 1945 (months after graduating from Johnstown High School), in Harrisburg, PA. He spent his time in Germany as part of the constabulary forces, drawing for the Army newspaper and sending back homemade comics to the family. After his discharge, Ditko was eligible for funding under the G.I. Bill of Rights, and, in 1950, he headed for Jerry Robinson in New York City to pursue his dream of becoming a comic-book artist.

Ditko was distinguished by his single-minded pursuit of excelling in what many considered the nadir of the illustration industry. The arrival of Superman and Batman in the very late 1930s popularized the cheap, disposable format of the comic book, but they were written and drawn by men with no influences within the new field. "Sequential art" existed only in newspaper strips, and not exactly in the same form that made a comic book successful over 20 pages, and in continuing months.

Comic books were also put together by men who, for the most part, seemingly put minimal effort into the work. They were, instead, biding their time, waiting for a superior paying job in advertising or were relishing the fantasy of lucking into a syndicated comic strip.

Steve Ditko, however, was part of the second generation of comic-book creators. That generation had members with influences in the field,

who wanted to work exclusively in the field, and who adored the sequential art form and wanted to expand its horizons. This was the genesis of what made Steve Ditko unique. He wanted in, wasn't going away until he got in, and (as history has shown 60 years later) he's never left.

Jerry Robinson was teaching at The Cartoonists & Illustrators School (now The School of Visual Arts). It was the first school with a curriculum devoted to the art of comics. Ditko enrolled part-time, in the evenings, working during the day. Monies were tight and Robinson helped Ditko secure the finances to attend in his second year. (Ditko even remained at the school during 1954, when he was a published comic-book artist.)

"Until I came under the influence of Jerry Robinson," said Ditko, "I was self-taught, and you'd be amazed at the hours, months, and years one can spend practicing bad drawing habits."³

Ditko's first work was published in 1953. This, and his subsequent work in 1954 for Charlton Comics, can be seen in *Strange Suspense: The Steve Ditko Archives Vol. 1*. He was temporarily waylaid by a bout of tuberculosis in 1954 that forced him back home, but that single-mindedness brought him back to New York City in the fall of 1955 to re-engage with Charlton. Unfortunately, natural disasters followed Ditko wherever he went.

Hurricane Diane devastated Connecticut in August of 1955, and especially laid waste to the offices and printing presses of Charlton, located in Derby, CT. With Charlton running on inventory until they dried out, Ditko began his first, brief association with Marvel Comics that produced the very first "Stan Lee / Steve Ditko" collaboration in 1956 (on a Western comic, no less).

By 1957, Charlton was back up to full steam and Ditko couldn't resist the one thing that the company offered that appealed to his *raison d'être* in comics: creative freedom. Just as Marvel Comics was part of a bigger publishing empire, so was Charlton Comics. Started in 1945 by a pair of Italian immigrants who met in prison — John Santangelo and Edward Levy — the umbrella company, Charlton Publications, published magazines and songbooks under one big roof in Derby.

Charlton Comics produced a few books that are remembered, mainly through association

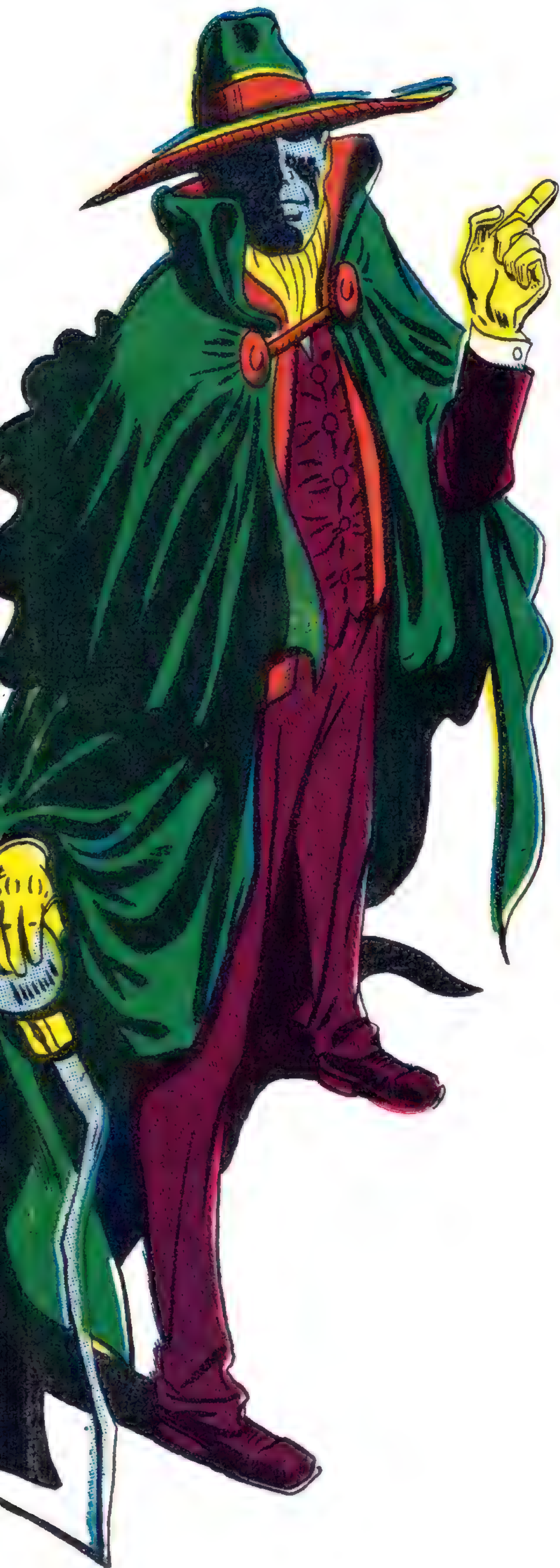
with subsequent publishers who picked up the characters (e.g., DC Comics bought the 1960s Charlton line of Action Heroes and they morphed into the Watchmen). What Charlton will always be remembered for is the dichotomy inherent in attracting Steve Ditko, one of the best pure artists in the field, to the company that produced material of the lowest quality in the industry, in terms of content and format. Their comics were printed on the worst paper and they paid staff a pittance to produce them. They cared only about the bottom line, mercilessly cancelling their randomly slapped-together anthology books if they fell below a certain profit line. As long as the content didn't have a negative impact on the Charlton brand and sales, what went into the books mattered very little.

The irony is that this is what attracted a true artist like Steve Ditko. With virtually no editorial oversight, he could test his skills in multiple genres and stretch the boundaries of the medium far more so than with any other company. Charlton had one other thing going for them: they paid quickly, which was good because they paid so little. Charlton's lead writer, Joe Gill (likely the author of many stories in this volume) saw his page rate drop to two dollars after the company recovered from the 1955 flood. Ditko made a mere \$6.50 for a finished page. By contrast, Sub-Mariner creator Bill Everett claimed to be making \$14 for a finished page (including writing and lettering)... in the early 1940s! Still, if an artist was capable of generating almost 500 pages of finished art a year, as was Ditko in 1957, he could make a decent living at Charlton.

The comics being produced at Charlton in 1957 suffered not just from their lack of commitment to quality but from the hangover of the editorial oversight organization known as the Comics Code Authority (CCA) that formed in late 1954. The first half of the 1950s saw the industry in a game of one-upmanship, each publisher attempting to produce the most gruesome, terrifying and grisly horror and crime comic books. Public and distributor pressures saw the industry muzzle itself with the implementation of the CCA that set up strict rules as to what could or could not be said, featured, displayed or conceptualized in a comic.

As a result, in the post-CCA era, narratives





rarely exhibited any daring and they often regurgitated plotlines that, at Charlton, sometimes barely displayed that *Twilight Zone*-inspired twist ending, often just petering out when the story's page count was reached.

Ditko enjoyed the challenge regardless; he must have, working on *that* many tales with little lasting story value. The poster boy for the 1950s attack on comics was Dr. Fredric Wertham, a psychiatrist who wrote the anti-comics tome *Seduction of the Innocent*. Published in 1954, it attempted to link the content of comic books to an alleged rise in juvenile delinquency that was supposedly plaguing America. (Good thing that the movie *Rebel Without A Cause*, starring James Dean, was a year away from being released!)

Ditko had little good to say about Wertham and his impact on the industry that Ditko had found so engaging before the CCA. "Wertham must be a pretty sad man these days," said Ditko in the late 1950s. "There's certainly not much he can attack in the comic books...did I say not much? There's nothing period. I can't understand his fanatical crusade against comics at this stage, there are certainly more urgent and dangerous social blights he can devote his energies to. I guess he's going to ride this kick he's on to the end."⁴

The quality material that Charlton *did* publish in 1957 is found primarily in two titles, both represented copiously in this volume.

"This is the Mysterious Traveler, inviting you to join me on another journey into the strange and terrifying. I hope you will enjoy the trip, that it will thrill you a little and chill you a little. So settle back, get a good grip on your nerves and be comfortable — if you can!"

That was the opening to the *Mysterious Traveler* radio show of the 1940s/'50s, whose rights were secured by Charlton to produce a comic book, with *Tales Of...* added to the title. The second title that greatly inspired Ditko was called *This Magazine Is Haunted*. It is a prime example of how the Comics Code altered comics even on a conceptual level. The narrator of the early 1950s entry *This Magazine Is Haunted* is the ghastly, skeletal "Dr. Death," but the host is renamed "Dr. Haunt" when the book was revived, featuring almost all Ditko works, in 1957.

It is the interplay between the host and the

narrative that Ditko exploits to great heights in both titles. Ditko literally infuses the host character into his page designs and the effect is liberating from the usual nine-panel grid of the day.

Perhaps the most formidable example of this is found in "Tomorrow's Punishment," a five-page story from *Tales Of The Mysterious Traveler* #6 (Dec '57). From the dazzling Eisner-esque opening splash page with its lush, evocative brushwork, to the brilliance of its final panel — the Mysterious Traveler, holding a shard of glass featuring trapped bank robbers who had been able to get away with robberies told to them by the now-shattered mirror — this is a prime display of how Ditko could turn the mundane into the miraculous.

This era also ushered in a number of Ditko motifs seen in his later work for Marvel Comics. On the aforementioned opening page, the bottom right panel features Ditko's signature rendering of the little curio shops (with all their ornately rendered objects from a bygone era) likely found in New York, but certainly summoned forth from his Eastern European background. These curio shop renderings dotted his pre-superhero Marvel work during the years of 1959 to 1961.

The title *This Magazine Is Haunted* was especially rich with the best storytelling and artwork of the era. The host, Dr. Haunt, is a template for the Jack Kirby character, The Watcher, from the *Fantastic Four* comic almost a decade later. In "The Thing On The Beach," from *This Magazine Is Haunted* v2 #12 (Jul '57), Dr. Haunt plaintively cries out, "If I could only warn them! But my role is limited to watching...and then telling haunting tales of what I've seen..."

That issue, the first of the rebranded title, is particularly strong. Rarely does an artist announce the host of a new book in such dramatic fashion as Ditko does in "The Faceless Ones." In fact, Dr. Haunt announces *himself*, appearing giant-like, treading over a busy metropolis. He tears apart multiple panels on page 2, Ditko breaking the fourth wall as if to advise (warn?) the reader of the host's omniscience.

In the same issue, the story "His Fate" plays a clever twist on the team of a ventriloquist and his dummy; the reader unsure as to why the good-looking proprietor is so down on himself until the curtain comes up on the big reveal.

The second issue of the title, #13 (Oct '57), features a variation on the story made famous in the 1987 movie *Angel Heart*, starring Mickey Rourke. "He Shall Have Vengeance" is the tale of a man whose mind is blank to the events of the death of his best friend. He's hunting the killer until it becomes apparent that he's chasing his own tail. (See another variation on this theme in the Lee/Ditko tale "Why Won't They Believe Me?" — the first story in *Amazing Adult Fantasy* #7, Dec '61.)

Quality storytelling in this volume isn't restricted to the two titles mentioned above. In "Stranger In The House" from *Mysteries Of Unexplored Worlds* #5 (Oct '57), a soldier drops in on a family of three, appears to terrorize them until the father steps up and, just as he does, the soldier disappears. How the soldier got there is reminiscent of many Marvel twisters of the early 1960s.

"Will Power" from *Unusual Tales* #8 (Aug '57) features a clever script about a male narrator (off-camera) attempting to will a female statue to life. He succeeds, but the result is not the desired one. "The Desert Spell" from *Strange Suspense Stories* #34 (Nov '57) is a rare Nazi story for Ditko. A German Chemical Warfare officer awakes in the desert in 1957 (having taken a suspended animation drink at the end of WWII), but he develops a rather severe "drinking problem" that has disastrous consequences. Ditko's ability to render the overwhelming heat of the desert amplifies the tone far more than the dialogue or plot.

And, while no one is likely to accuse famed Hollywood director Steven Soderbergh of "borrowing" the plot of his 2011 movie, *Contagion*, from "Plague" in *Out Of This World* #6 (Nov '57), if you start sneezing while reading this story, *put the comic down and quarantine yourself immediately!*

Other stories in this volume stand primarily on Ditko's artistic contributions. "Free," from *Strange Suspense Stories* #35 (Dec '57) has Ditko using Zip-a-Tone (similar to Dave Sim's use on *Cerebus*) to great effect. "The Night Of The Red Snow," from *Unusual Tales* #9 (Nov '57), is strong from start to finish, Ditko clearly enjoying the use of red snow and negative space. This story is also rife with many of the Ditko motifs developed during

this volume's era, such as the use of extreme close-ups on eyes and parts of faces to display desperate fear and paranoia. The tale is similar to "The Night They Learned The Truth" from *Out Of This World* #5, also presented in this volume, featuring a painter looking for the perfect shade of red.

Ditko's rendering of negative space is also used to great effect on "From All Our Darkrooms..." in *Out Of This World* #4 (Jun '57). The cover of this issue, and the inside splash page, features another Ditko motif that was unusual for comics of this era. Numerous times did Ditko incorporate his name onto a cover or in a panel. Here, on the cover, Ditko signs his name on the street post and does so twice on the splash page. (Jim Morrison of 1960s rock band, The Doors, may live on Love Street, but I'll buy real estate on Ditko Street any day! And I hold the trademark for *Comic-Book Monopoly*, the board game.)

Numerous other motifs show up in this volume's work that would be used during Ditko's Marvel days in the 1960s. "All Those Eyes" from *Out Of This World* #6 (Nov '57) has a down-pat prototype of the Chameleon, the villain from *Amazing Spider-Man* #1. "The Faceless Ones" from *This Magazine Is Haunted* v2 #12 (Jul '57) has Ditko's three-scenes-in-one future panel used in *Amazing Spider-Man* #4 when a fight with the Sandman threatens to reveal Spider-Man's identity (remember Aunt May selling pencils?). "The Last One" from this same issue features Ditko's head-hovering-over-past-events panel motif.

"Clairvoyance" from *Unusual Tales* #9 (Nov '57) features another theme close to Ditko's heart. Children sick in bed were a recurring element in Ditko's work. A family member of his had been confined to a bed for a year with rheumatic fever, and Ditko incorporated this into at least four stories in the next three years (including a Marvel Comics tale from *Amazing Adult Fantasy* #10, and a Captain Atom story). This story also features themes that played out in Spider-Man. The young boy in this narrative — rejected by the "in-crowd" at school because of his intelligence, much like Peter Parker — develops super powers and then loses them because, subconsciously, he wants to be a normal boy.

Other motifs that famously appeared in Ditko's

1960s Marvel work include old, rickety houses — "The Menace Of The Invisibles" — *This Magazine Is Haunted* v2 #13 (Oct '57); old rickety men — "Where Is Kubar?" — *Mysteries Of Unexplored Worlds* #6 (Dec '57); and seedy criminals — "The Faceless Ones" (5 pgs) — *This Magazine Is Haunted* v2 #12 (Jul '57). The motif of mocking mouths and floating heads passing judgement on the central character — seen in the Marvel Comics story, "Help!" (*Strange Tales* #94, Mar '62) — shows up twice in this volume in "Look Deep Into My Eyes" — *Mysteries Of Unexplored Worlds* #6 (Dec '57) and "The Man Below" — *Tales Of The Mysterious Traveler* #5 (Nov '57).

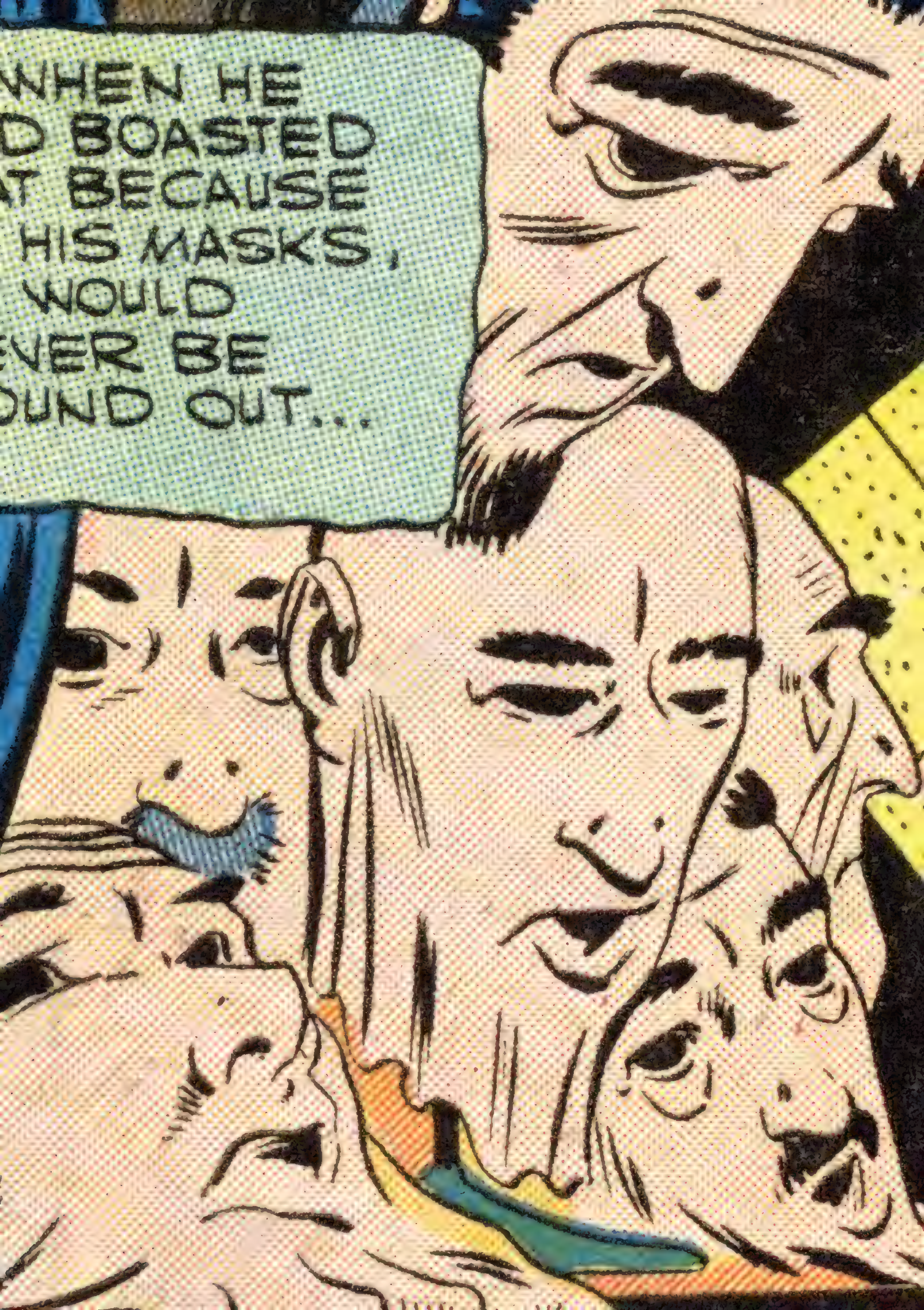
This particular motif was borrowed from one of Ditko's main influences, artist Mort Meskin, known for his work on the DC Comics characters The Vigilante and Johnny Quick, as well as collaborations with Jerry Robinson. Ditko worked briefly beside Meskin at the Joe Simon / Jack Kirby studio in 1953, and Ditko followed Meskin's mantra of never sacrificing function for form in telling an effective story.

In a 1965 piece written by Ditko for the fanzine *The Comic Reader*, he lavished praise on Meskin: "Sure there are comic artists who can draw automobiles that look like they could drive off the page, artists who use 500 lines to form an eyebrow and artists who draw every leaf on tree or every rivet on a bridge. But if the story is not told properly, what good is a lot of detailed objects or fine lines? There is a vast difference between a comic artist who tells a story and a comic 'Technician' who draws detailed items or objects."

Sometimes, however, not even Ditko could save a truly terrible 1950s Charlton script. "The River's Wraith" from *Out Of This World* #6 (Nov '57) is hilariously florid in its "prose," seemingly written by an aspiring novelist from another era. In a tale about a once mighty river halted by a dam and about to take its vengeance, it's amusing to imagine what any eight-year-old reading the comic in 1957 would have made of this literary dirge: "Squeezed into a corset of concrete, her liquid muscles were broken to be used for man's power."

There are also examples of a story's end missing the final act (as if the writer just ran out of pages to finish a story and figured the editors

WHEN HE
D BOASTED
AT BECAUSE
HIS MASKS,
WOULD
EVER BE
OUND OUT...



at Charlton wouldn't notice), or where the alleged twist ending is not set up in the first act. In "I Made A Volcano" from *Out Of This World* #5 (Sep '57), Ditko draws a great "reveal" panel at the end of the man who's been trapped for years in the Amazon jungle and has taken to plugging volcanoes (you read that right). Only problem is that, when they put the flashlight on his face in that last panel, he is indeed an old-looking man, and there's nothing present in the first act that contradicts this information. He's not even some character shown earlier in the story that the reader would have suspected as the culprit (as if this was to be a "whodunit" story). He's been stuck in the jungle for years and the reader is supposed to be shocked that he's revealed to be old and looking ragged? Even *Mysterio* would find this ending mystifying. (Note, however, the last panel on page

two and its similarity to Ditko's first work for his 1958 return to Marvel on page two of *Strange Worlds* #1.)

What made Charlton even more haphazard at the time was the way they slapped books together. *This Magazine Is Haunted* and *Tales Of The Mysterious Traveler* helped align the stories with the comic-book titles but, as long as the stories matched the genre for a given title, the editors seemed to be completely random with how they put books together... and the order in which they prepared books.

Nicola "Nick" Cuti, an editor at Charlton in the 1970s, describes the completely random modus operandi by which Charlton cobbled their books together: "We would assign stories and some of them were eight pages, some ten, some 15. And they would go out to the artists, we'd

Right: Unpublished Ditko eye drawing from letter to fan Mike Britt, Nov. 10, 1959.



get the stories back and then we'd stack them up on the shelves. When we had to put together a magazine... we'd get three stories and we'd find ourselves a page or two pages short... so that was the reason for a lot of those single- and two-page stories."⁵

The stories in this volume (and the previous and subsequent volumes) are being presented not by publication date, but by the order of the job number assigned to each story. Job numbers were what the editor assigned to keep track of the inventory coming and going. If this method of presentation had not been chosen for the *Steve Ditko Archives* series, tracking Ditko's stylistic progression would be much more difficult, because stories drawn by Ditko in 1957 were often published in later times, making for a stark stylistic juxtaposition.

An example can be found in the first issue of the relaunched *This Magazine Is Haunted* v2 #12 (Jul '57). "The Last One" has a job number of s1936 and it is a story without the host, Dr. Haunt, while all the other stories have him as their central focus. The Dr. Haunt stories start with job numbers of s1968 and are all in order. Clearly, s1936 was drawn, thrown on a shelf, and then pulled into the book when they needed to fill out the comic.

Even though job numbers are assigned when the writer receives the story, ordering stories by job number, as opposed to publication date, is the best way to watch an artist like Ditko progress throughout the years and to present a cohesive volume of artwork. There is ample testimony and evidence to suggest that writers like Joe Gill, and artists like Steve Ditko, turned over their work so quickly (mainly because of low pay and because Charlton paid weekly and on

time) that, at Charlton more so than anywhere else, any examples of an artist "sitting" on a script would be few and far between. Ultimately, the evidence is found in these pages, seeing Ditko's progression by job number instead of publication date. One only has to open an original issue published in 1957 or 1958 to see the disparity in style between job numbers that are quite distant from one another.

Ditko wasn't finished with 1957, and neither is the *Steve Ditko Archives* series. Almost half of Vol. 4 of the *Steve Ditko Archives* will comprise material from 1957, to finish off the almost 500 pages Ditko drew during that year.

1958 was a turning point in the life of Steve Ditko. He became financially stable enough to share a studio with a former classmate of his. Little did the world know that in all the years Steve Ditko was producing the Amazing Spider-Man, he was sitting across from his studio-mate, Eric Stanton, the famed fetish artist who drew titillating titles like "Escape into Bondage," "Hole in One," "Nurse in Rubber" and "Strapped for Time." The dichotomy that is Steve Ditko was about to grow even wider...

ENDNOTES

- 1 Text adapted from Season 1 (1959-60) opening episode narration to the TV show *The Twilight Zone* created by Rod Serling.
- 2 Steve Ditko, letter to Michael Britt (Oct 23 '59).
- 3 Steve Ditko, interview in fanzine *Rapport* #2 (1966) by Robert Greene, pg. 12.
- 4 Steve Ditko, letter to Michael Britt (Sep 30 '59).
- 5 Nicola "Nick" Cuti interview, *Comic Book Artist* #12 (Mar '01).

This is the windup for now,

Steve.







FROM ALL OUR DARKROOMS...

AT HIGH NOON ON THE 27th OF APRIL, 1972, AT THE CORNER OF CLAWSON AVENUE AND 34th STREET...

L-LOOK! THAT MAN! H-HE'S TURNING INTO A NEGATIVE!

Ditko



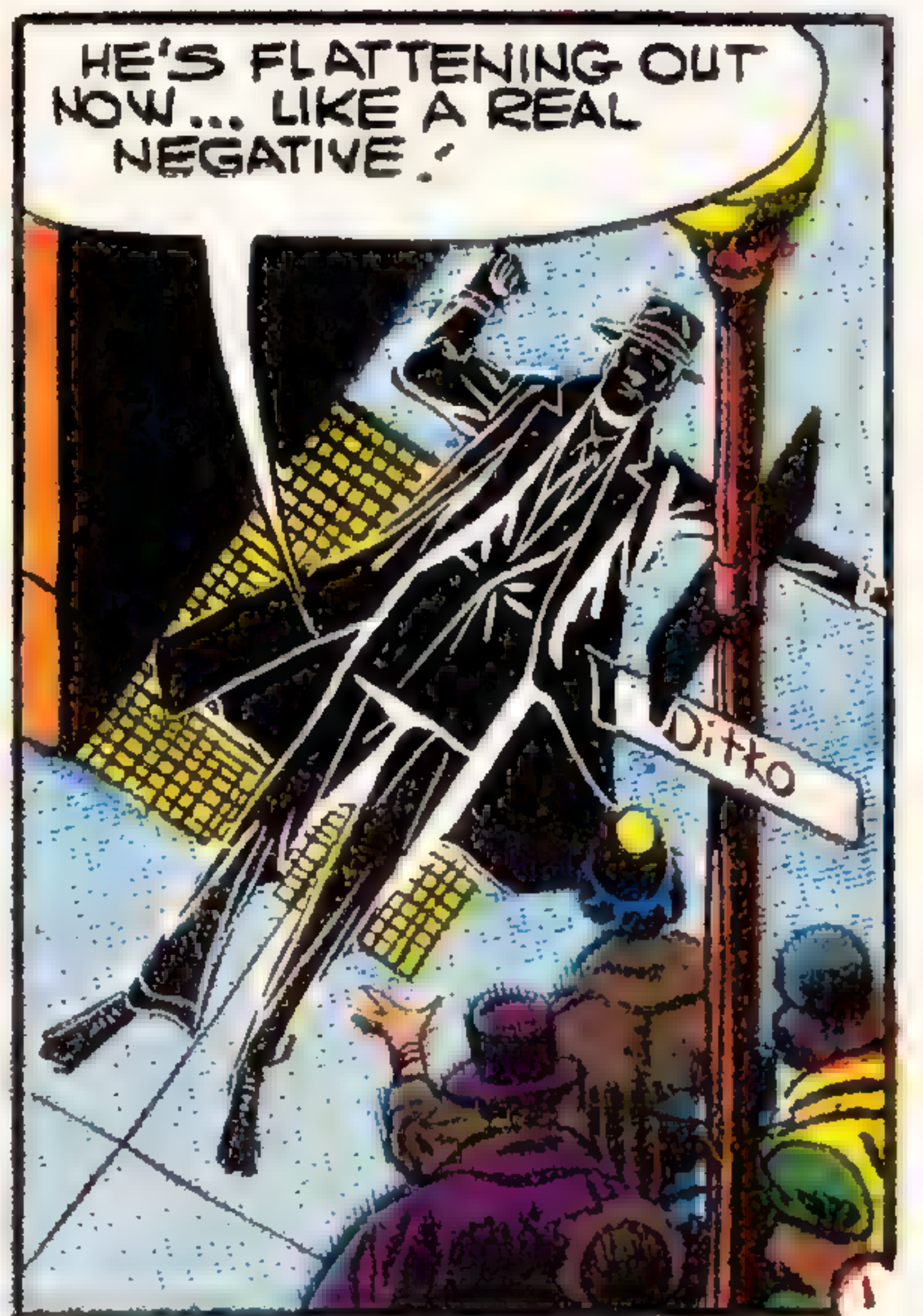
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TH-THIS IS TERRIBLE! WHY DOESN'T SOMEBODY HELP HIM?

I-I WOULDN'T TOUCH HIM FOR A MILLION DOLLARS!

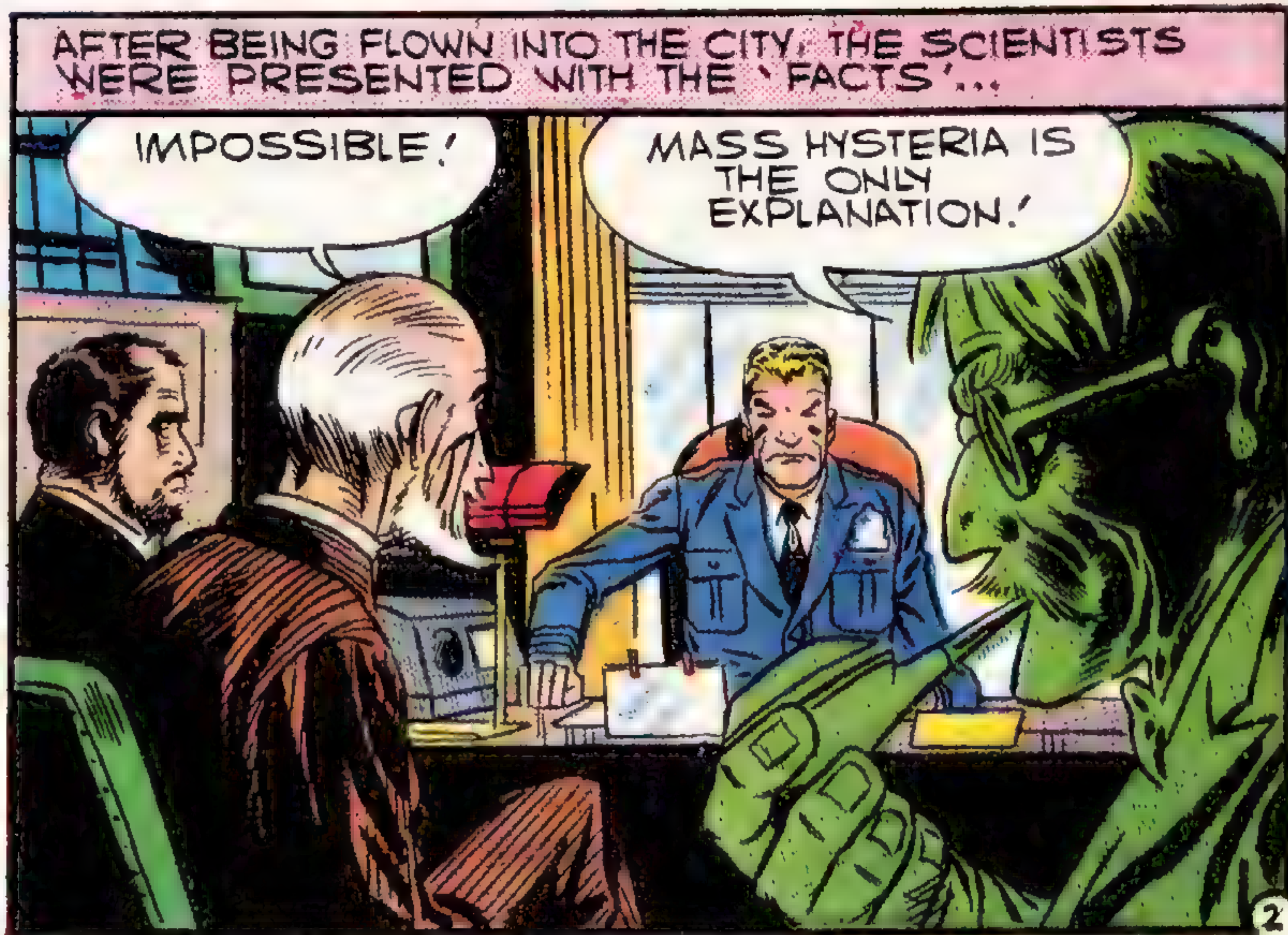
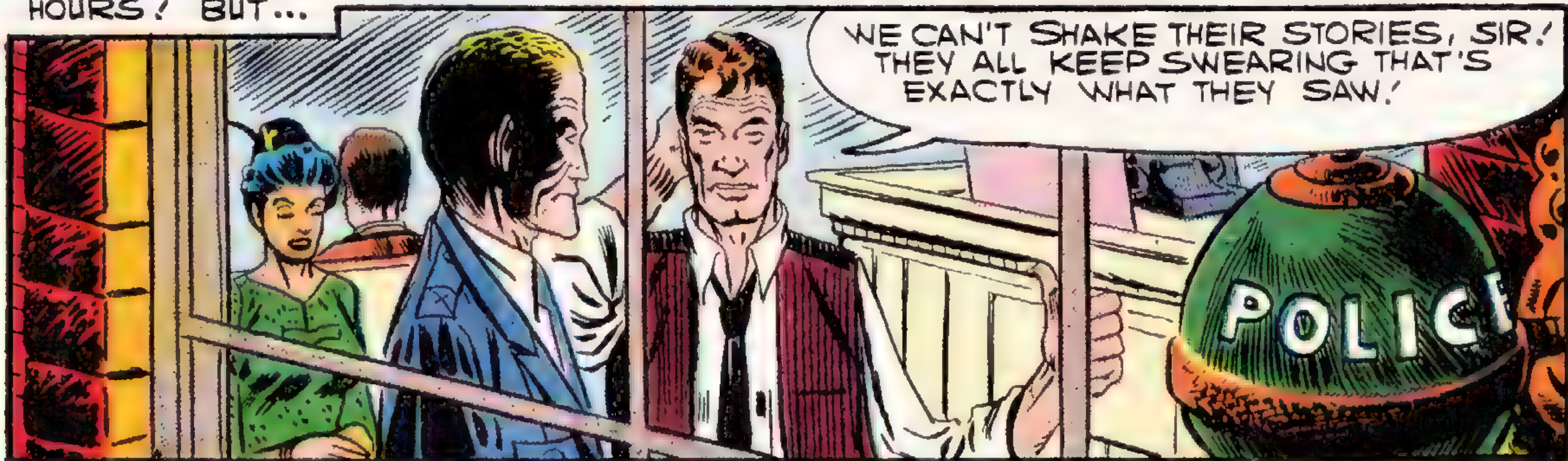


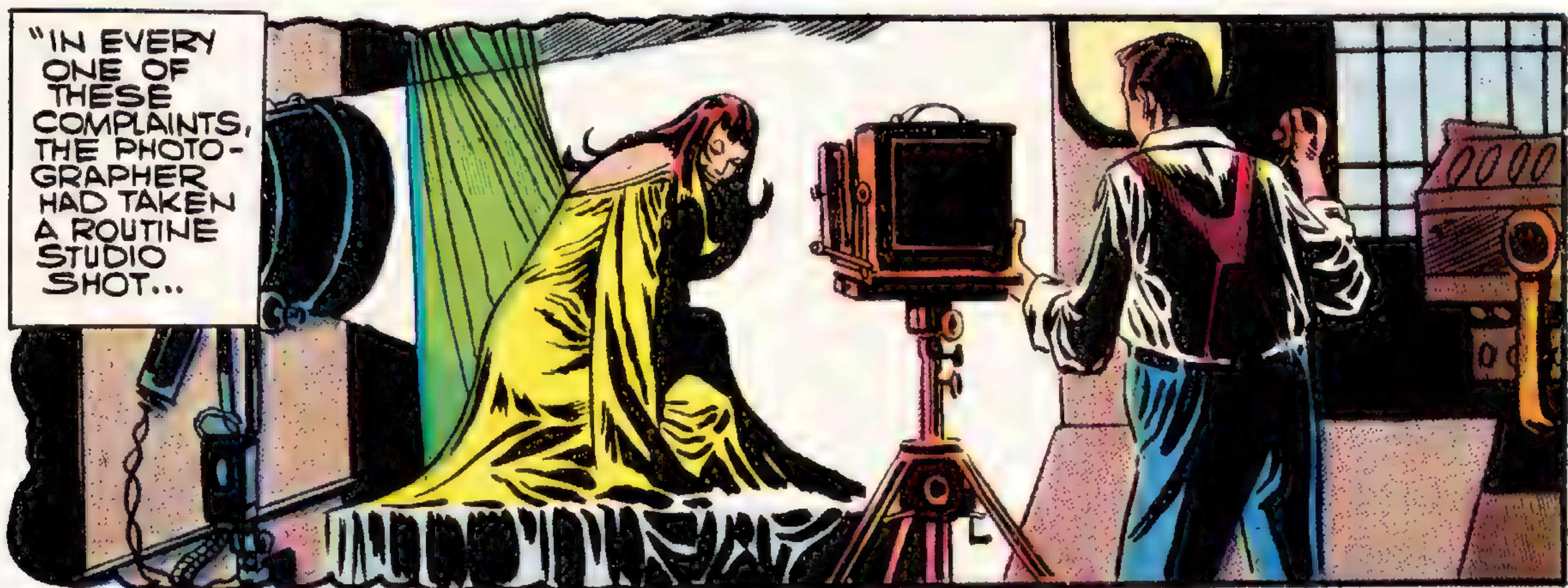
HE'S FLATTENING OUT NOW... LIKE A REAL NEGATIVE!





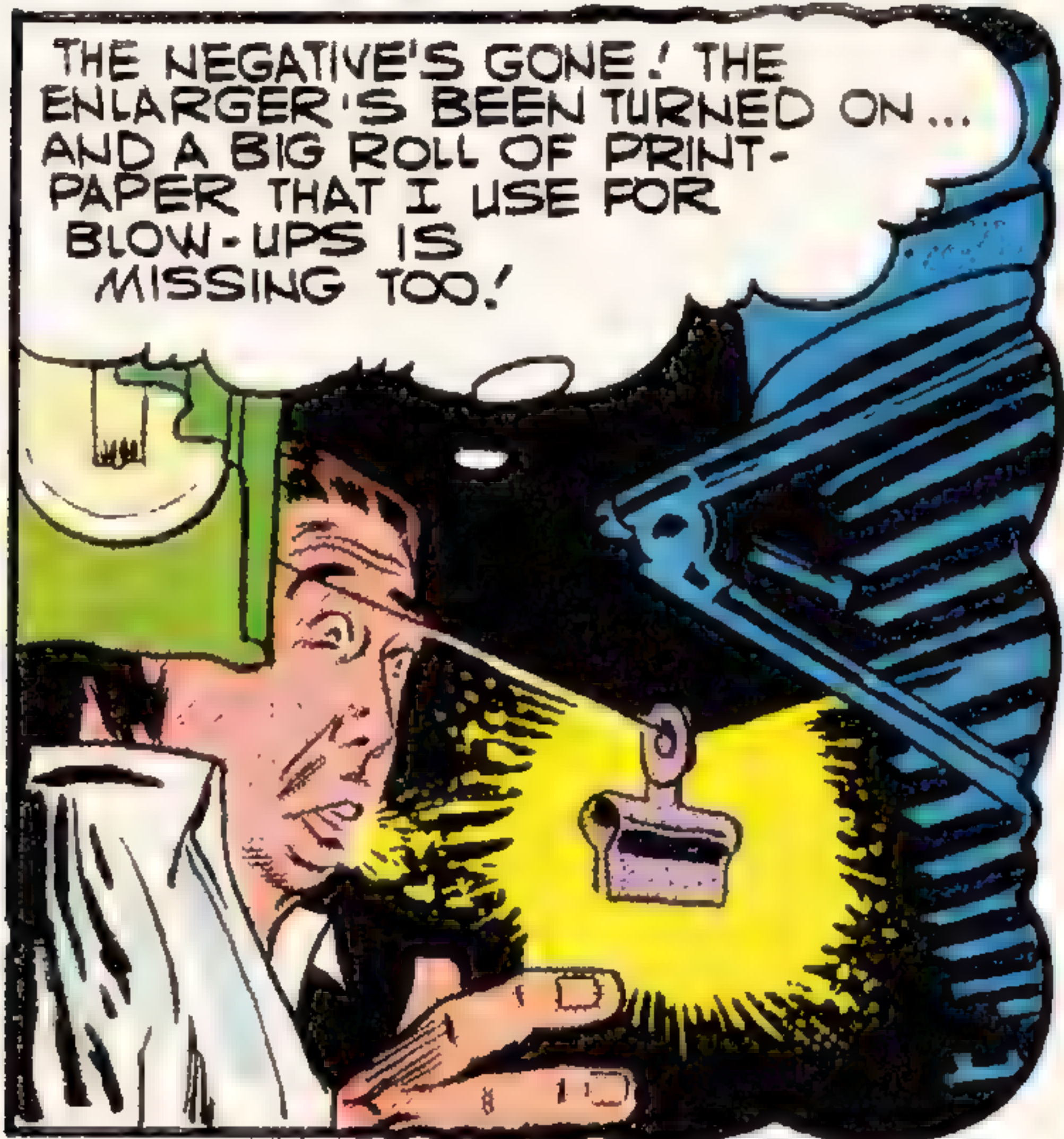
THE WITNESSES WERE TAKEN TO A POLICE STATION, AND INTERROGATED THERE FOR HOURS! BUT...



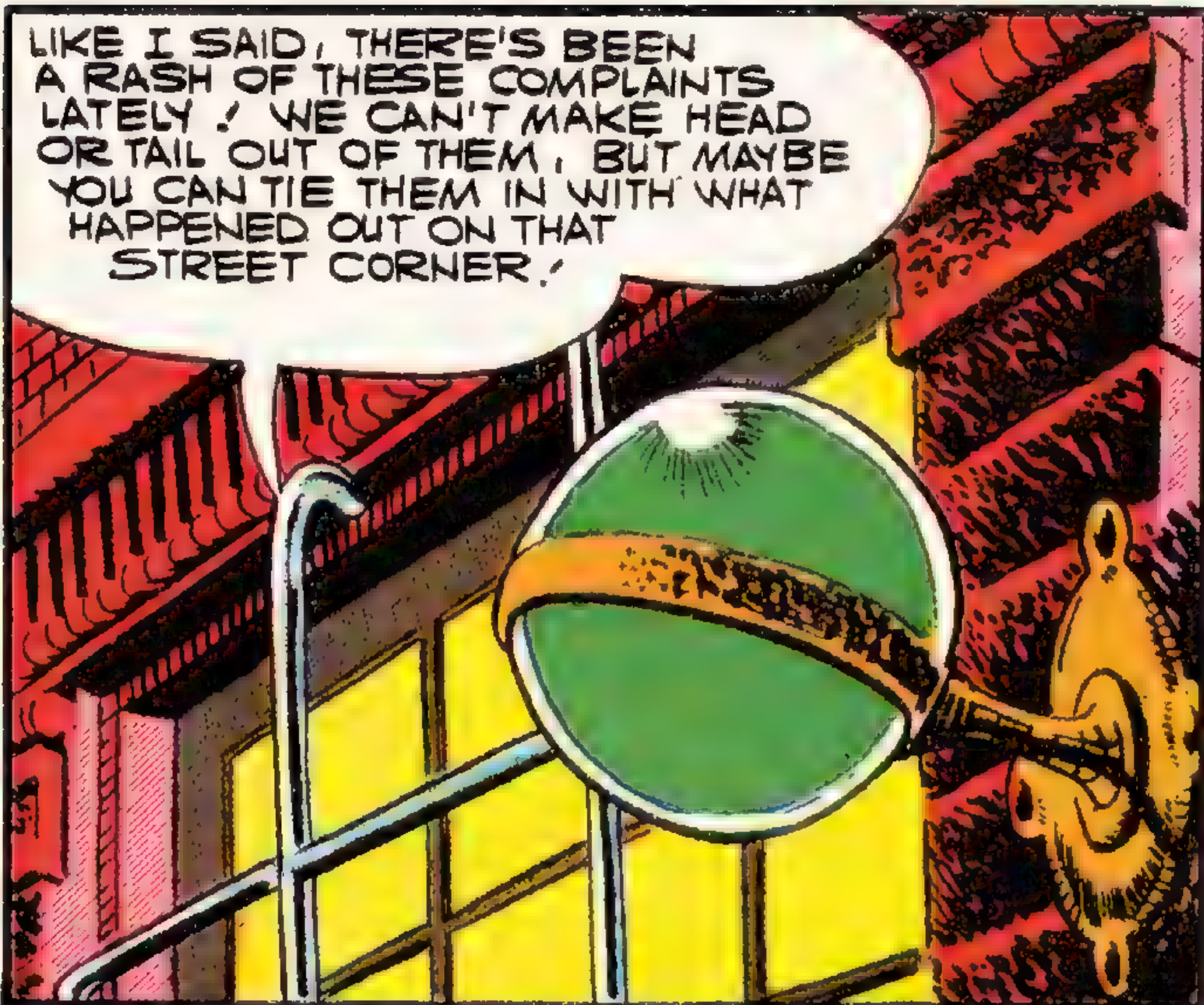


AND WHEN HE GOT BACK...

THE NEGATIVE'S GONE! THE ENLARGER'S BEEN TURNED ON... AND A BIG ROLL OF PRINT-PAPER THAT I USE FOR BLOW-UPS IS MISSING TOO!



LIKE I SAID, THERE'S BEEN A RASH OF THESE COMPLAINTS LATELY! WE CAN'T MAKE HEAD OR TAIL OUT OF THEM, BUT MAYBE YOU CAN TIE THEM IN WITH WHAT HAPPENED OUT ON THAT STREET CORNER.

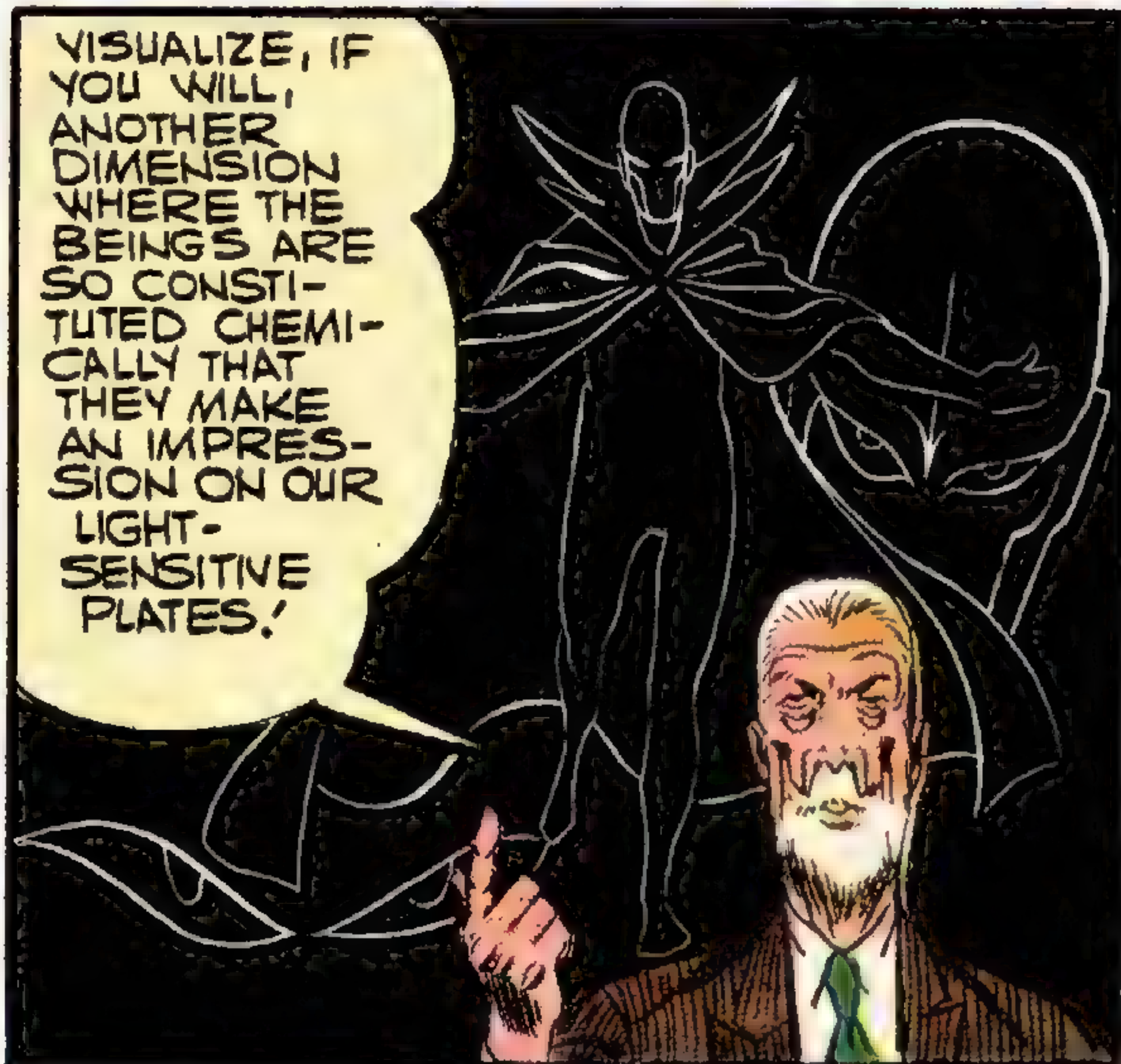


FOR A LONG TIME THE SCIENTISTS SAT THERE, WONDERINGLY, SEARCHING THEIR MINDS! THEN...

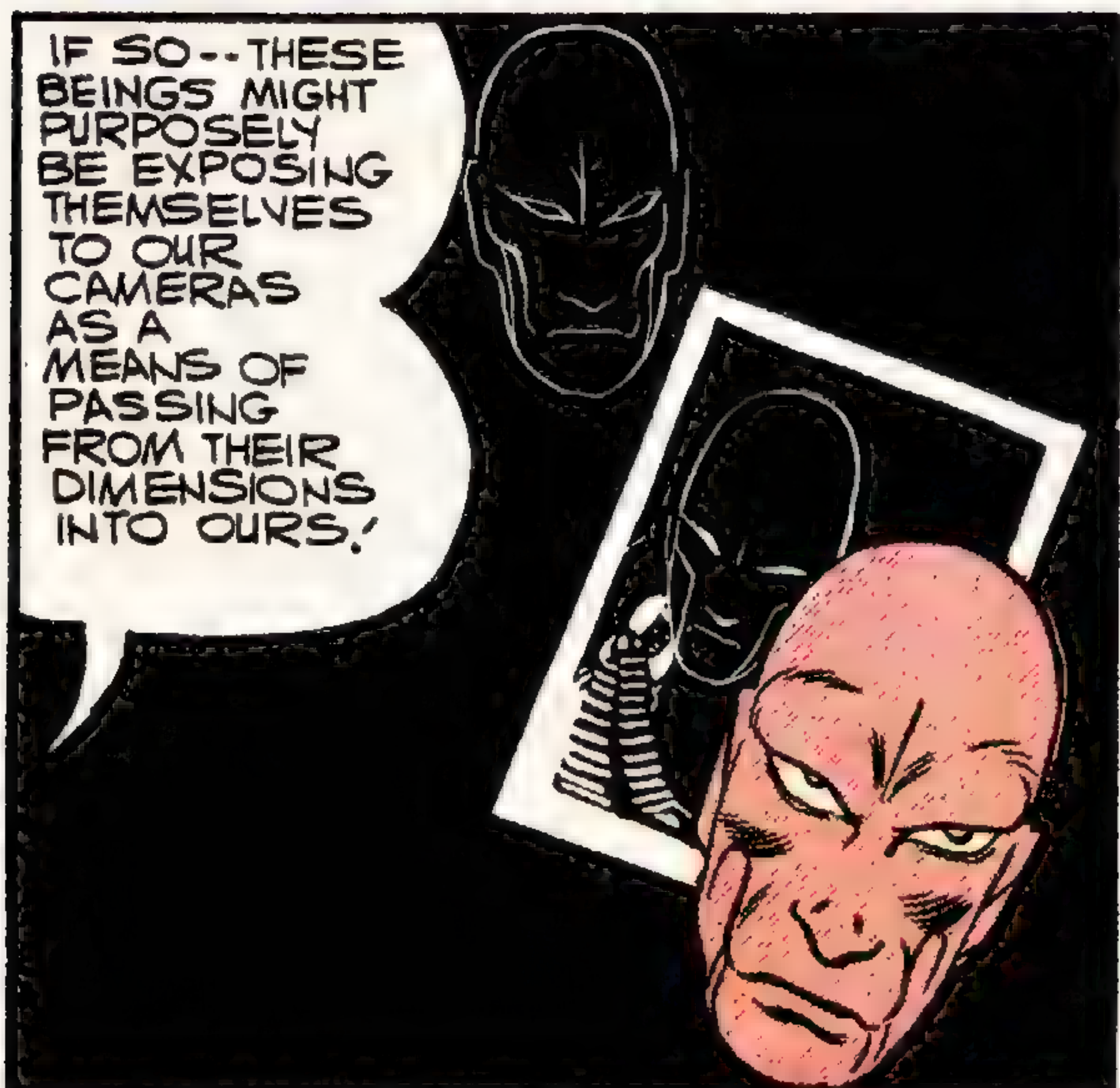
I THINK I MIGHT HAVE AN EXPLANATION...



VISUALIZE, IF YOU WILL, ANOTHER DIMENSION WHERE THE BEINGS ARE SO CONSTITUTED CHEMICALLY THAT THEY MAKE AN IMPRESSION ON OUR LIGHT-SENSITIVE PLATES!

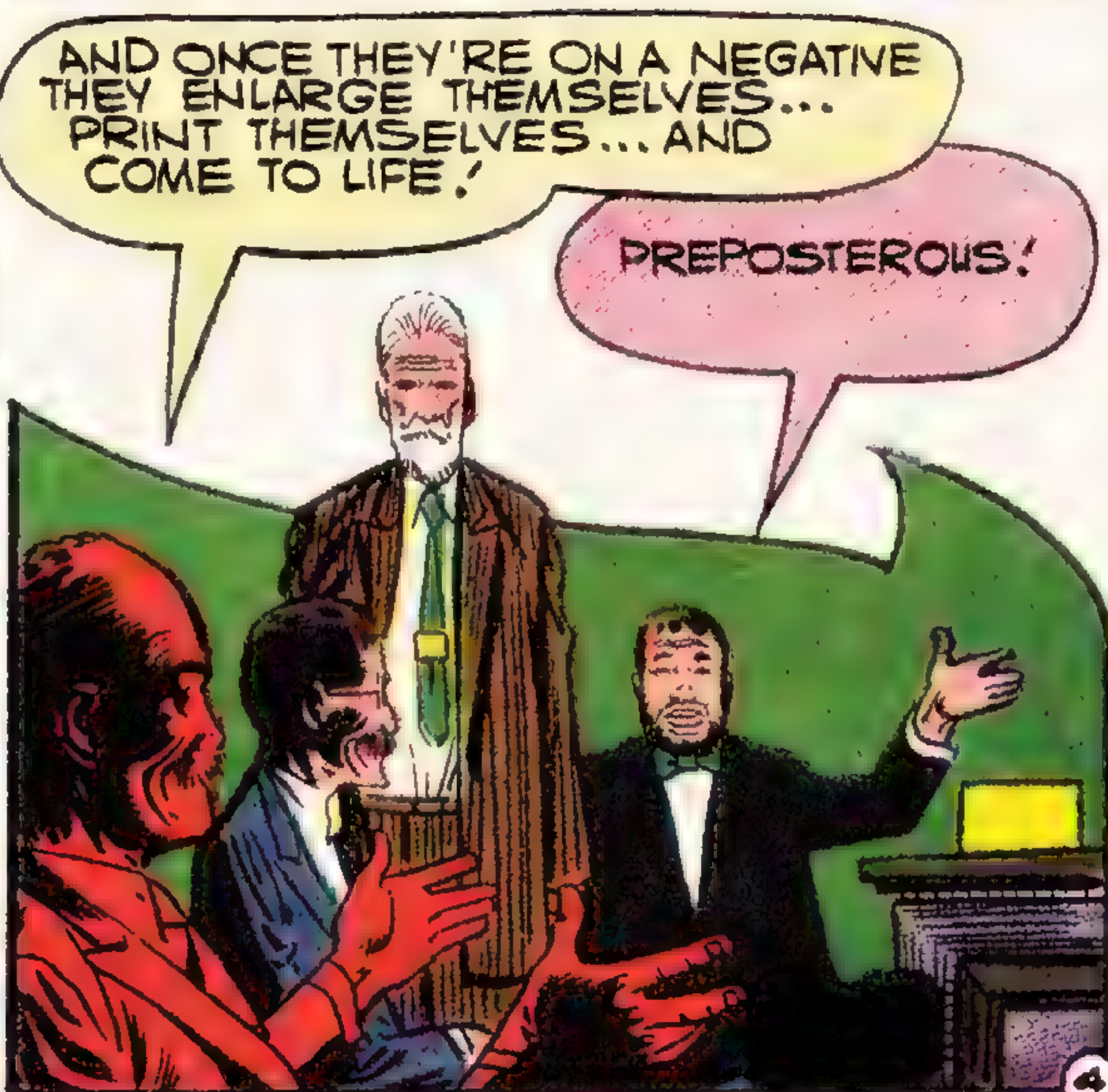


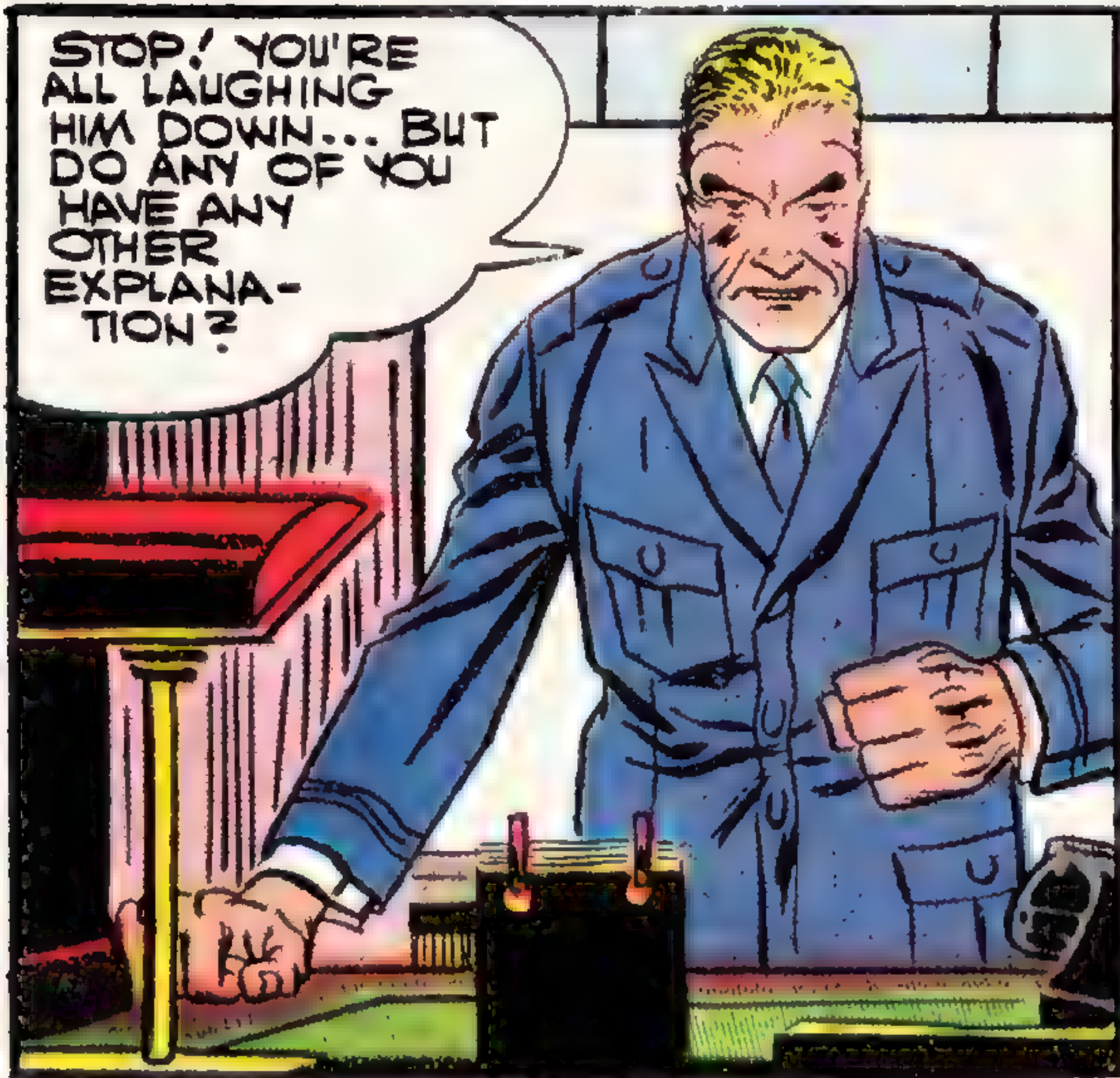
IF SO--THESE BEINGS MIGHT PURPOSELY BE EXPOSING THEMSELVES TO OUR CAMERAS AS A MEANS OF PASSING FROM THEIR DIMENSIONS INTO OURS!



AND ONCE THEY'RE ON A NEGATIVE THEY ENLARGE THEMSELVES... PRINT THEMSELVES... AND COME TO LIFE!

PREPOSTEROUS!

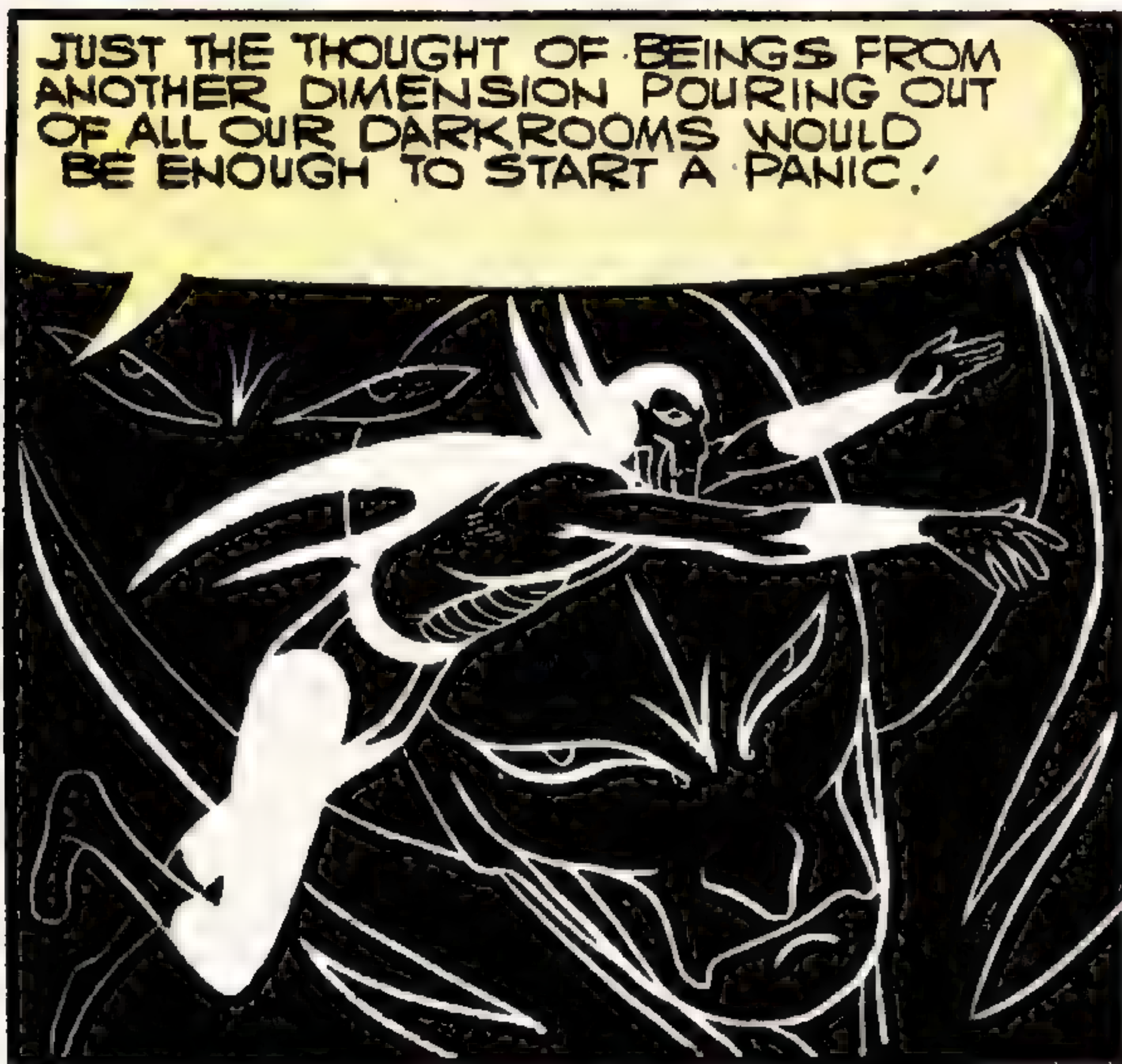




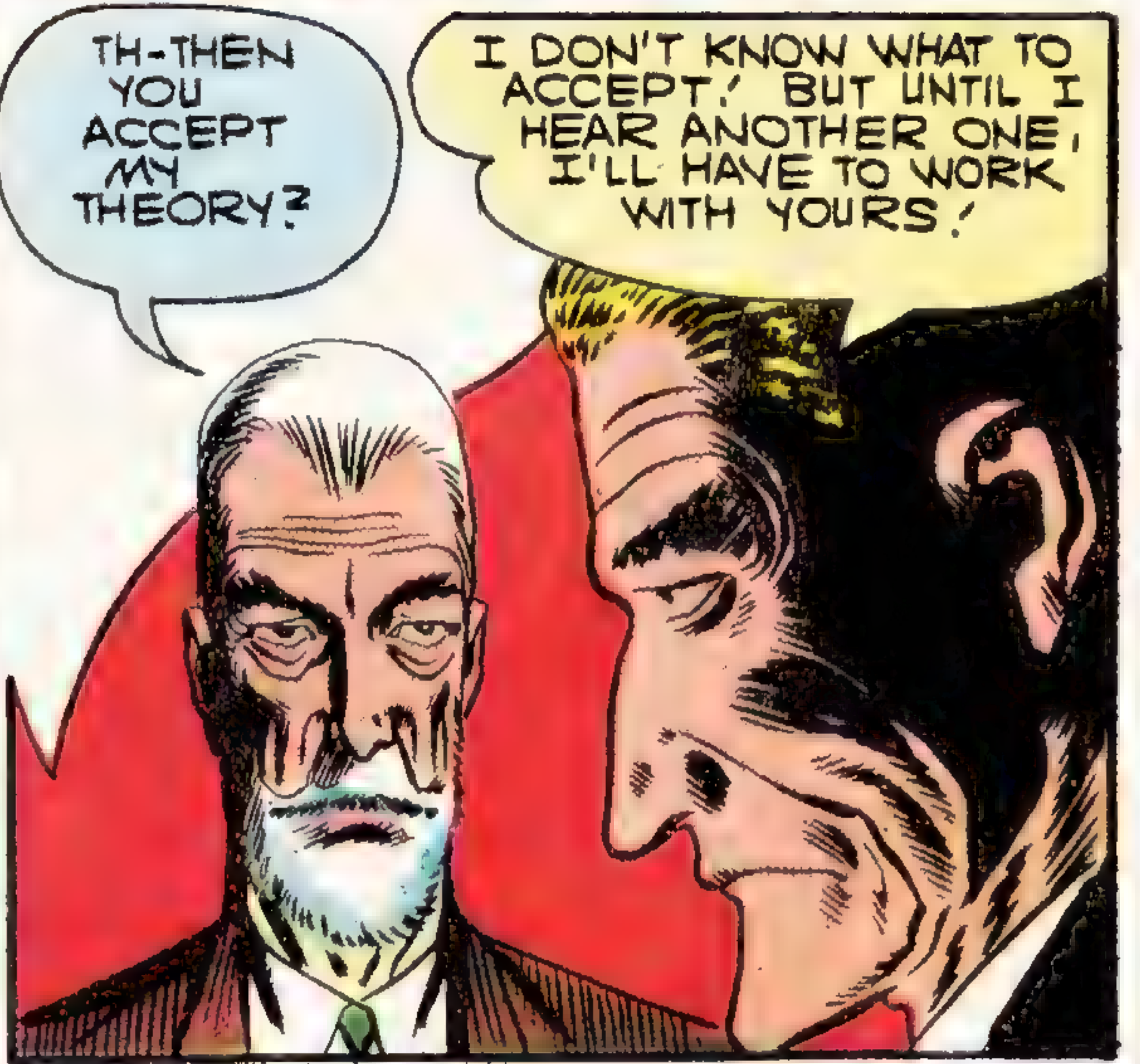
STOP! YOU'RE ALL LAUGHING HIM DOWN... BUT DO ANY OF YOU HAVE ANY OTHER EXPLANATION?



I THOUGHT NOT! NOW LISTEN HARD-- I DON'T WANT ANY OF THIS TO LEAK OUT!



JUST THE THOUGHT OF BEINGS FROM ANOTHER DIMENSION POURING OUT OF ALL OUR DARKROOMS WOULD BE ENOUGH TO START A PANIC!



TH-THEN YOU ACCEPT MY THEORY?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO ACCEPT! BUT UNTIL I HEAR ANOTHER ONE, I'LL HAVE TO WORK WITH YOURS!



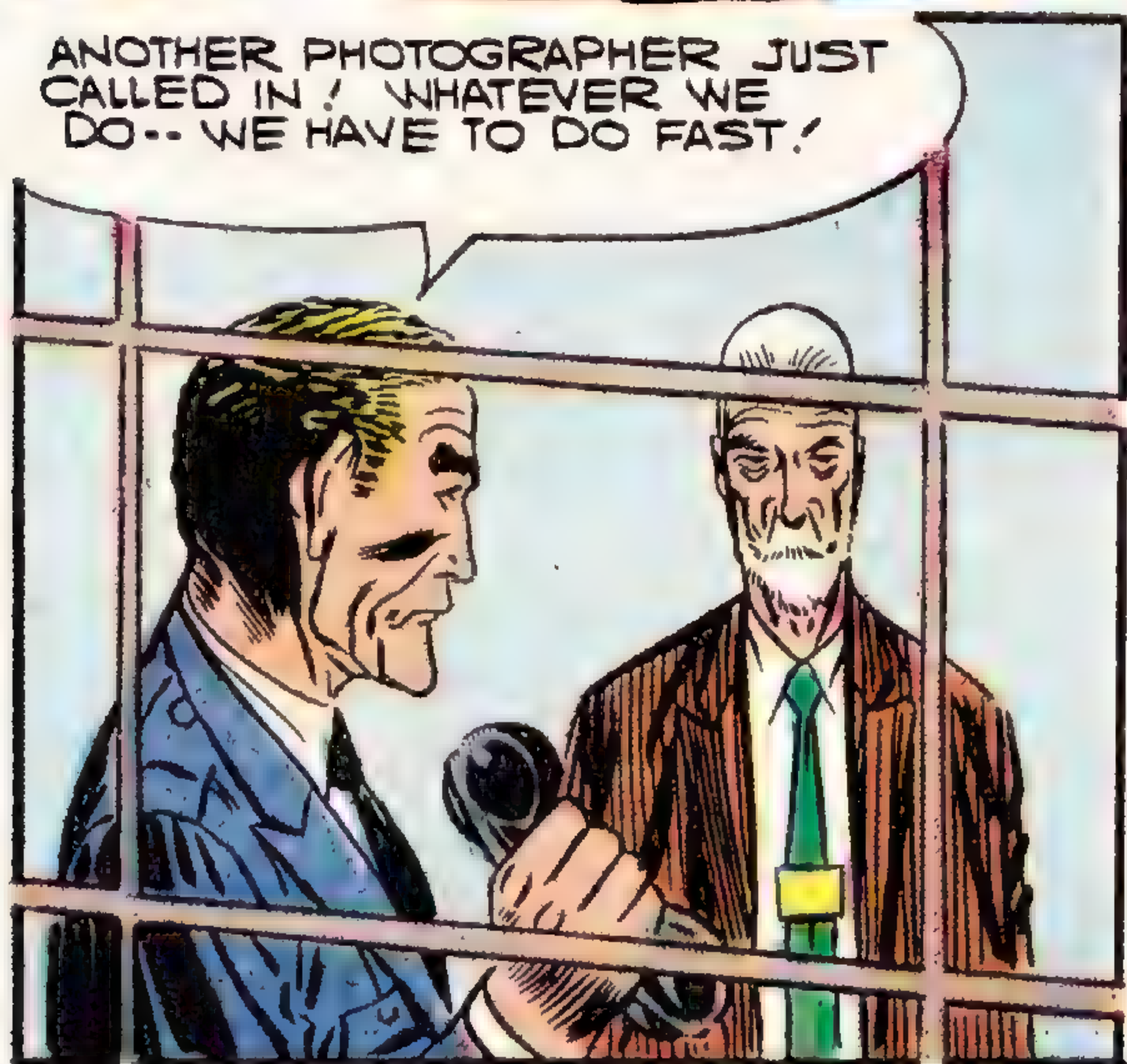
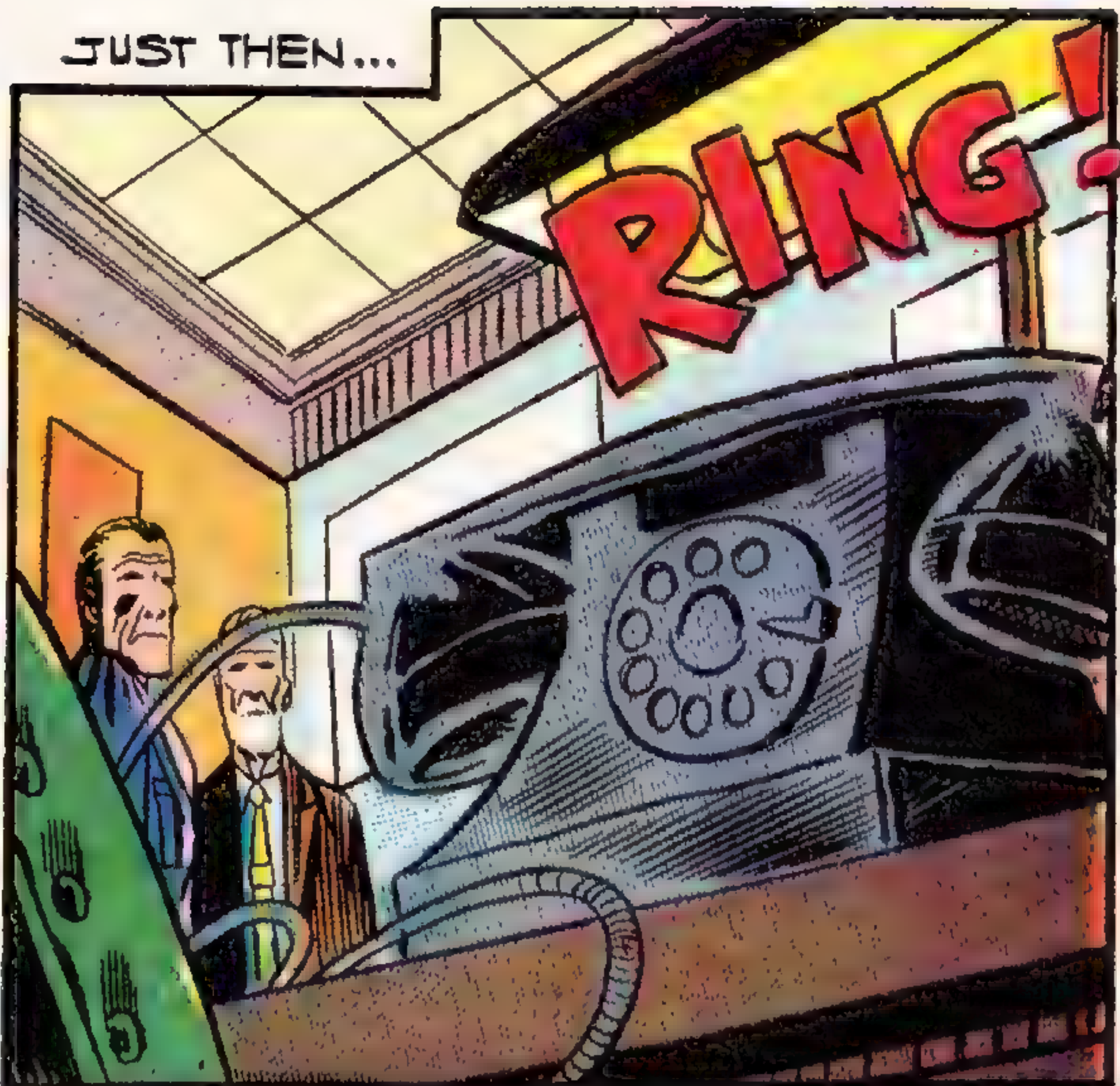
THESE BEINGS-- DO YOU THINK THEY MEAN HARM?

COULD BE! IF THEY WERE FRIENDLY, THEY'D HAVE CONTACTED US BY NOW... INSTEAD OF STAYING UNDER WRAPS!



COULD BE THEY'RE WALKING AROUND... CASING OUR DIMENSION... PLANNING TO TAKE OVER!

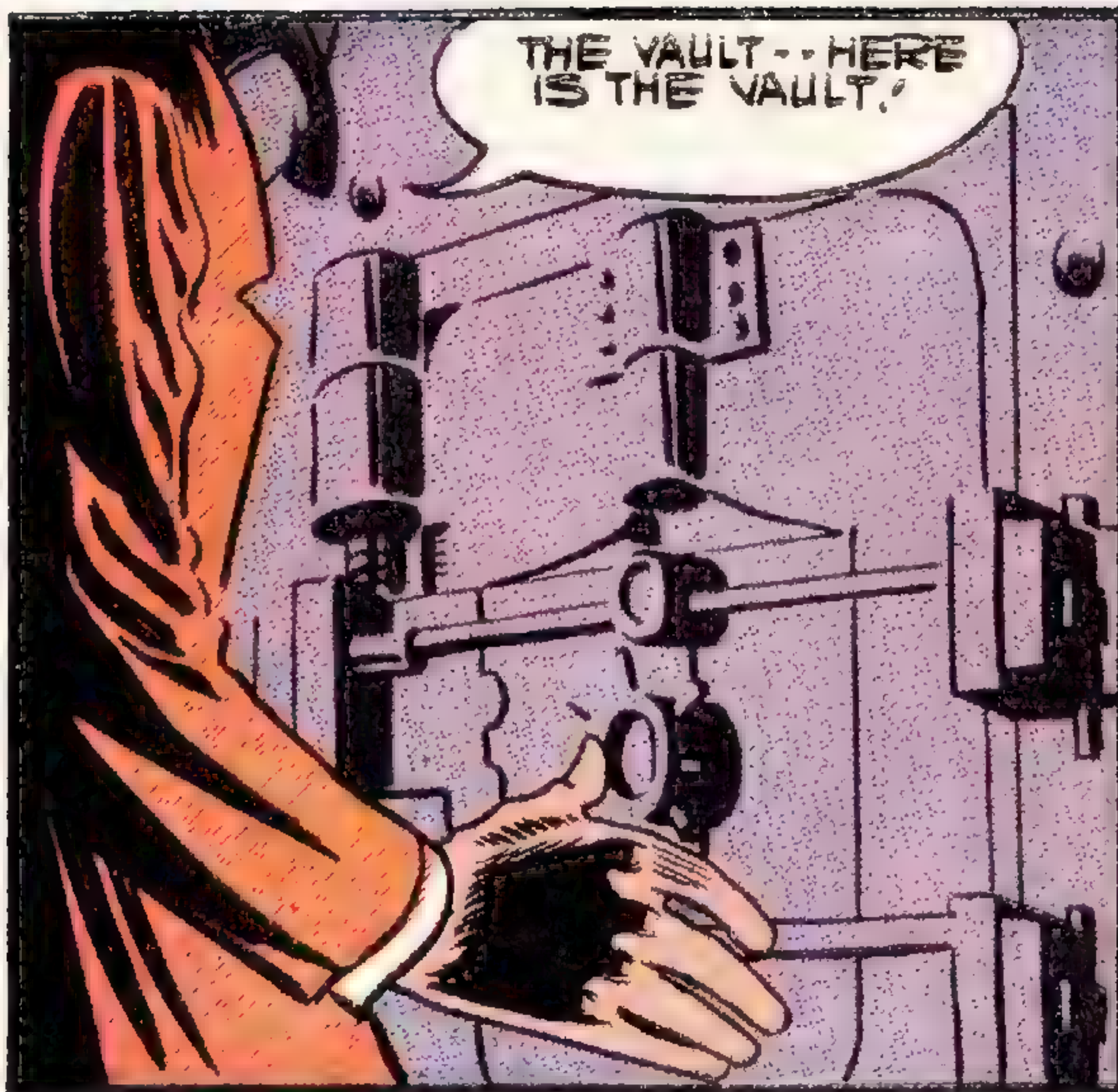
IF SO-- HOW CAN WE STOP THEM?



THE BURGLAR ALARM WAS PITIFULLY EASY TO BYPASS. WE ARE INSIDE ... AND NOBODY KNOWS



THE VAULT -- HERE IS THE VAULT.



THEY THOUGHT THE BLUEPRINTS WERE SAFE HERE!

THEY MIGHT HAVE BEEN SAFE AGAINST BEINGS OF THEIR OWN DIMENSION ... BUT NOT AGAINST US!



IT IS TOO DARK! WE NEED LIGHT TO FIND THE BLUEPRINTS!

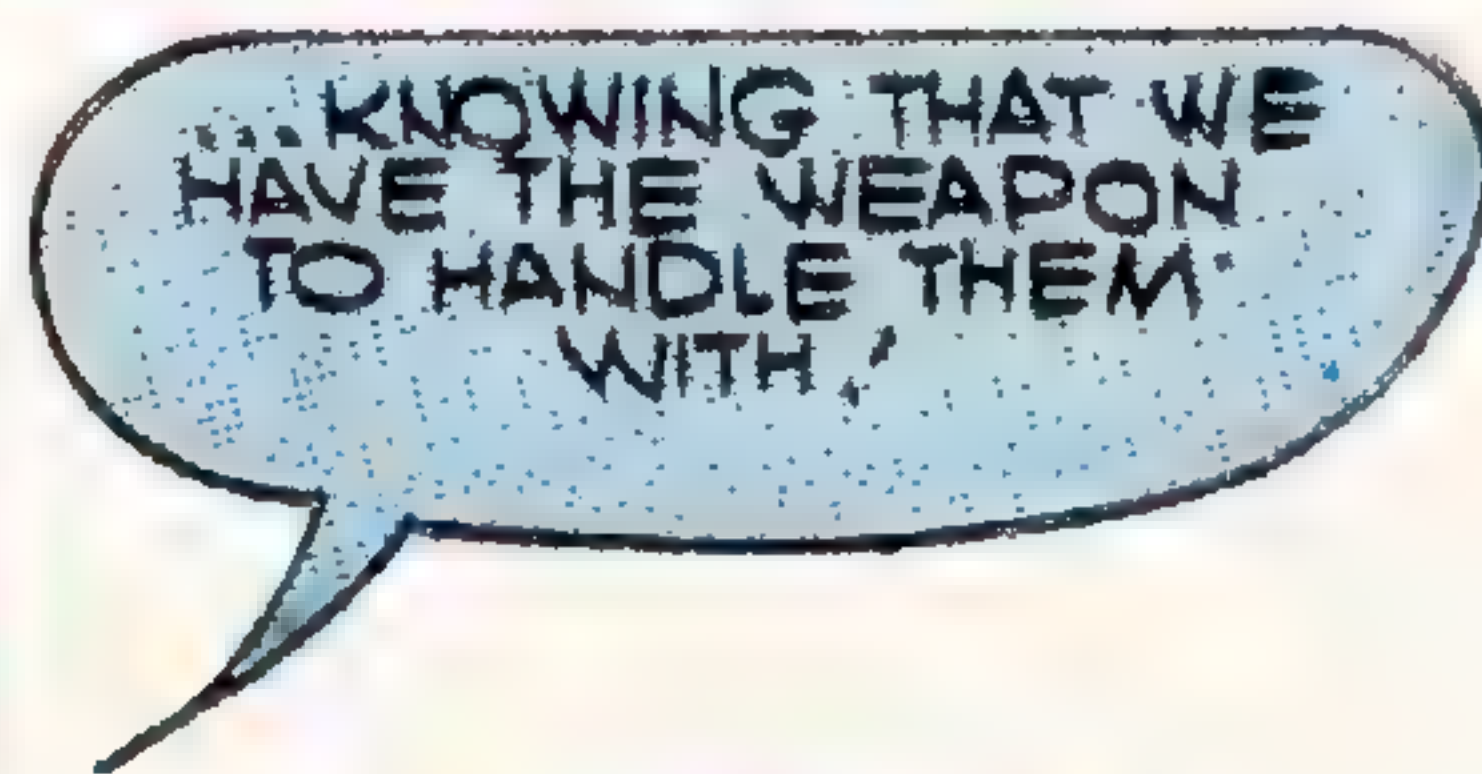
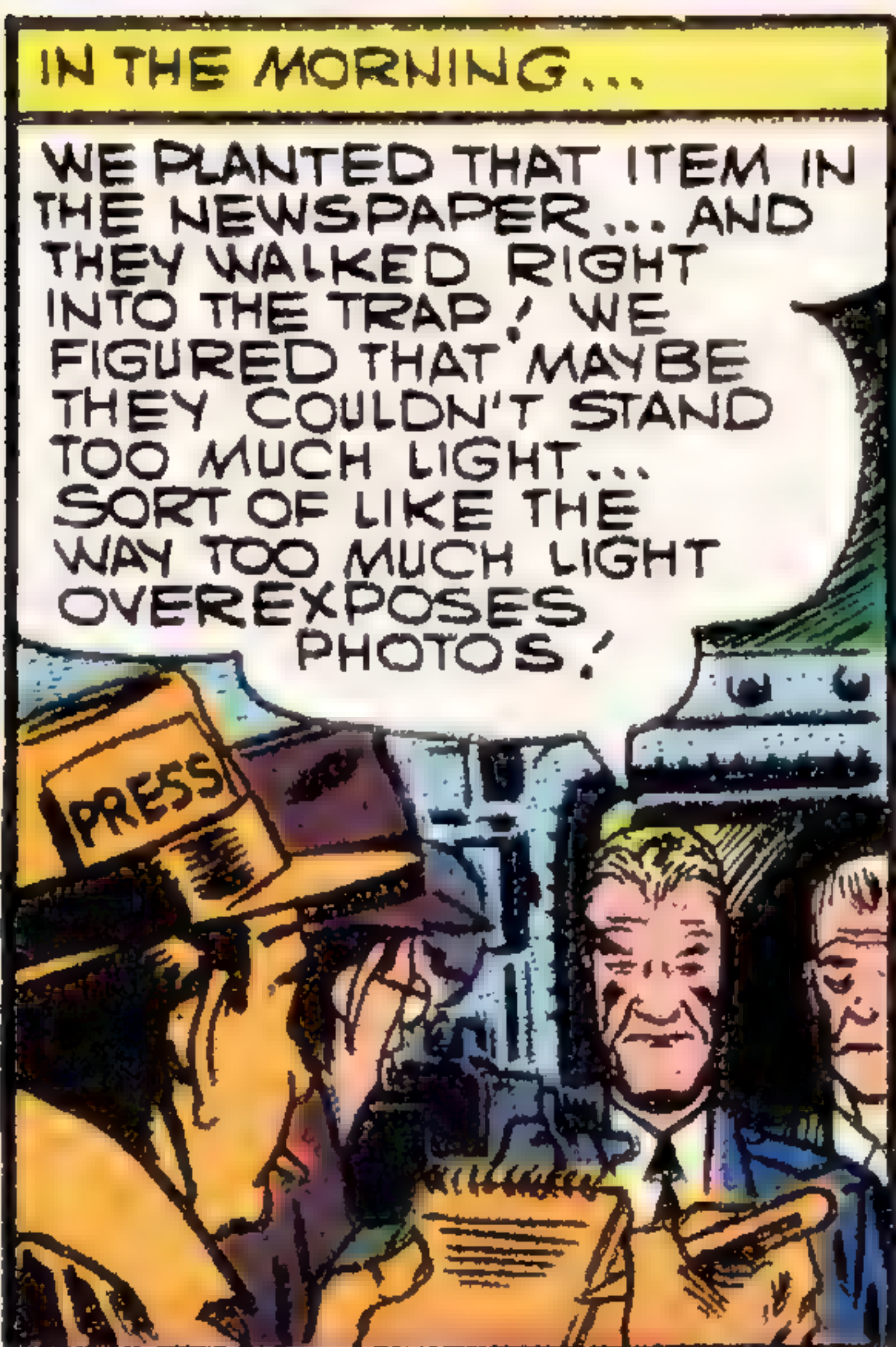


I HAVE FOUND THE SWITCH!



THAT LIGHT!





END

THE MENACE OF THE MAPLE LEAVES

NO, SIR... THEY DIDN'T COME ANY MORE HARD
HEADED THAN MR. MIKE STONE! THAT TALL-
TIMBER SLASHER WASN'T ONE TO BELIEVE.
TALL TALES... HE BELIEVED ONLY WHAT HE
COULD SEE WITH HIS OWN TWO EYES!

THE LEAVES...
TH- THEY'RE COMING
AFTER ME!



OURS IS TALL TIMBER
COUNTRY! A DAY DOESN'T GO
BY WITHOUT THE AIR HERE -
ABOUTS FILLED WITH THE
RING OF SHARP AXES AND
THE CRASH OF FALLING
TREES...



BUT THERE'S ONE STAND
OF TREES... THOSE BIG
MAPLES... THAT NOBODY
HAS EVER LAID AXE TOO...

THEY'D BRING
A GOOD PRICE
AT ANY
MILL!

SURE,
BUT NO-
BODY 'LL
EVER
TOUCH
EM!



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Ditko

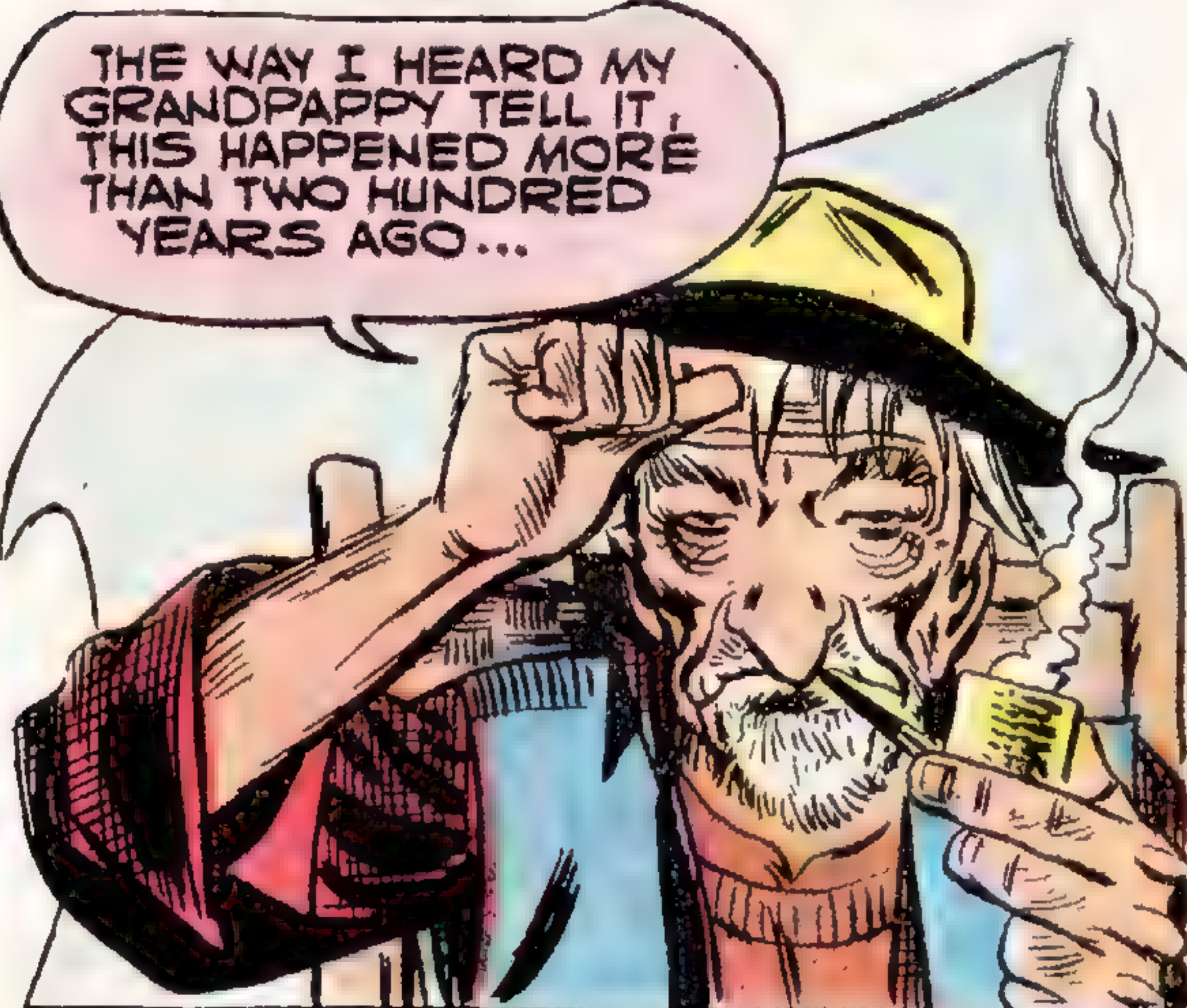
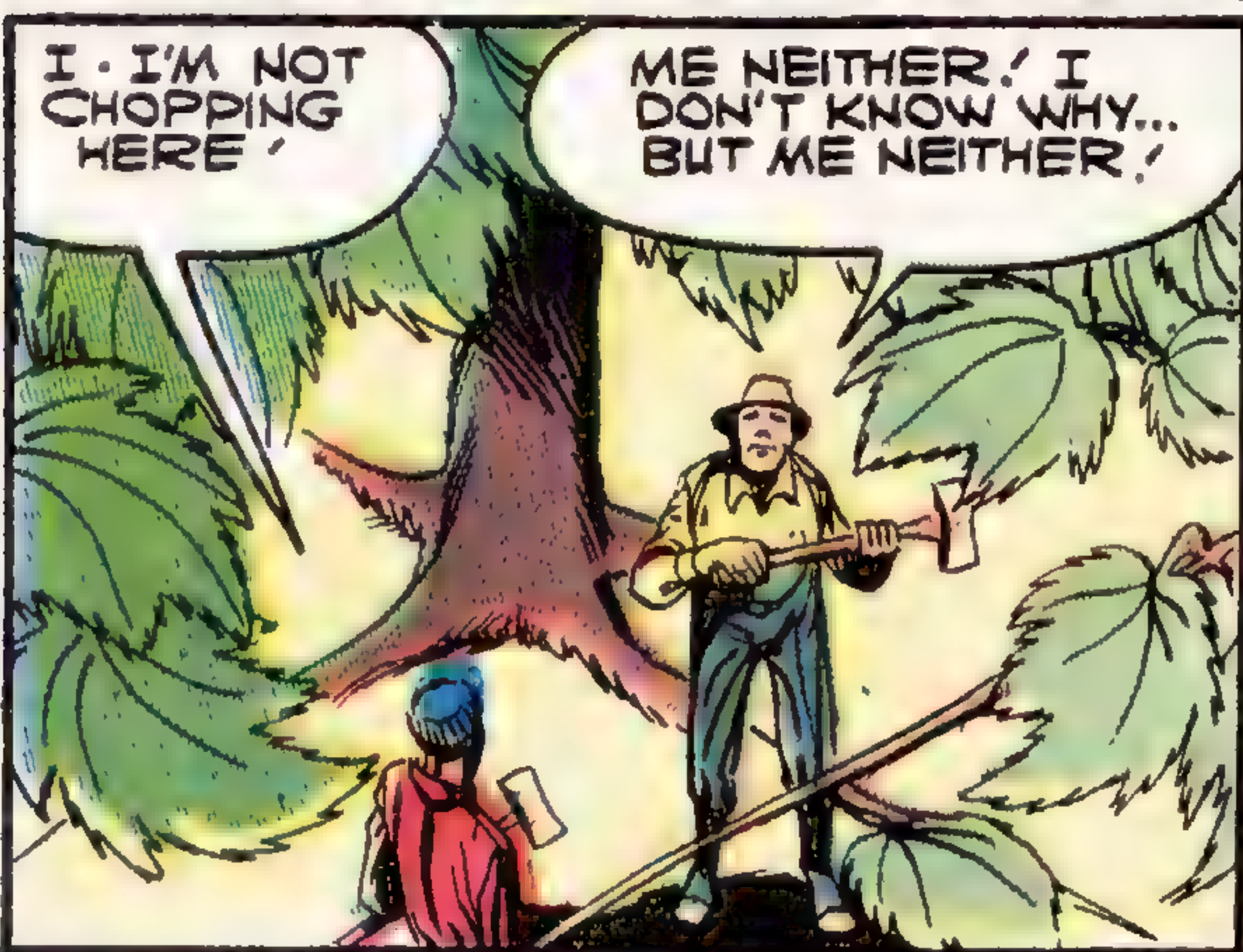
NONE OF US HAD THE STORY STRAIGHT... BUT WE KNEW THAT JUST TO WALK INTO THAT STAND OF MAPLES WITH AN AXE IN YOUR HAND, WAS ENOUGH TO SEND A STRANGE FEAR KNIFING INTO YOUR HEART...

EZRA MILLER, THE OLDEST MAN HERE-ABOUTS, TELLS A CRAZY STORY ABOUT THOSE TREES...

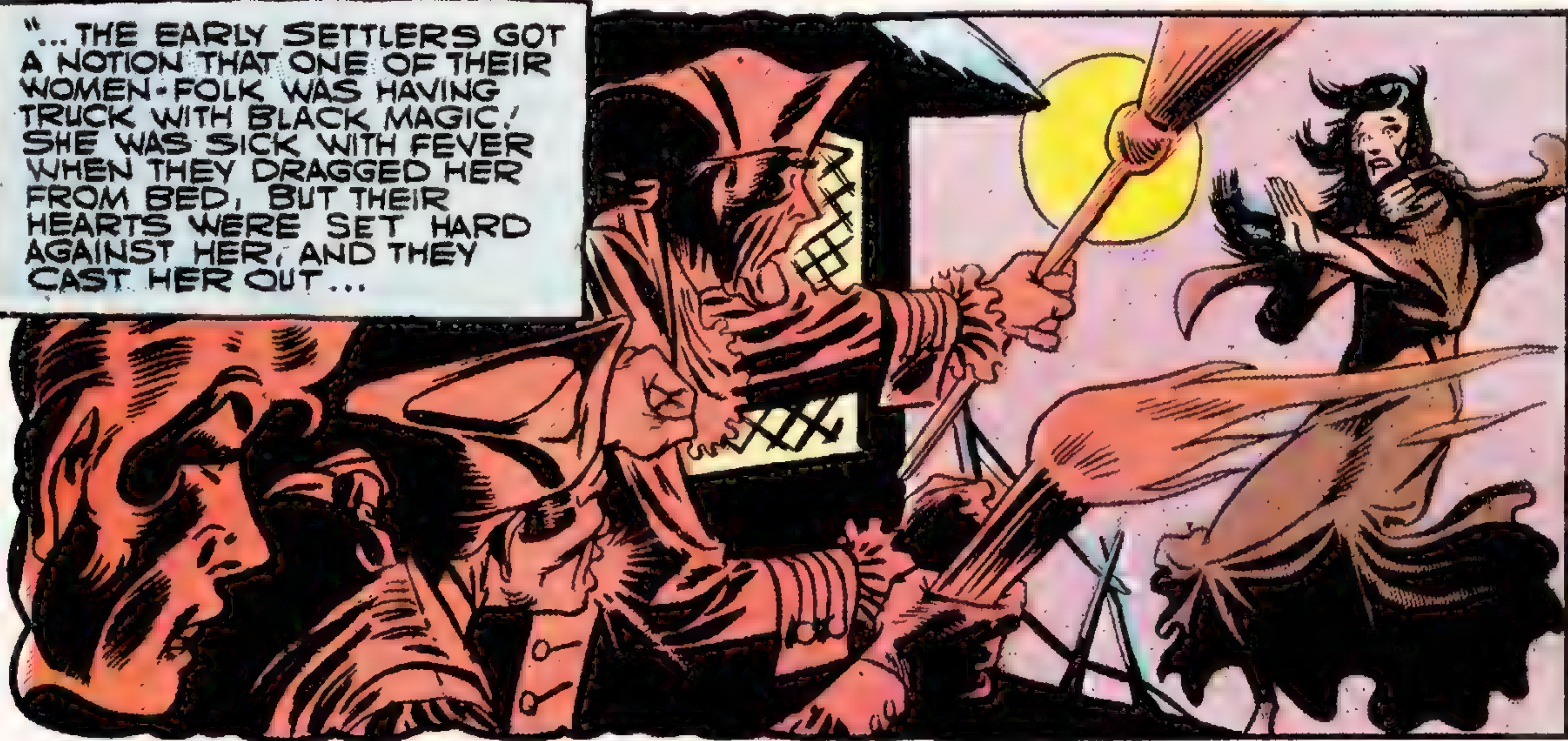
THE WAY I HEARD MY GRANDPAPPY TELL IT, THIS HAPPENED MORE THAN TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO...

I - I'M NOT CHOPPING HERE -

ME NEITHER! I DON'T KNOW WHY... BUT ME NEITHER!



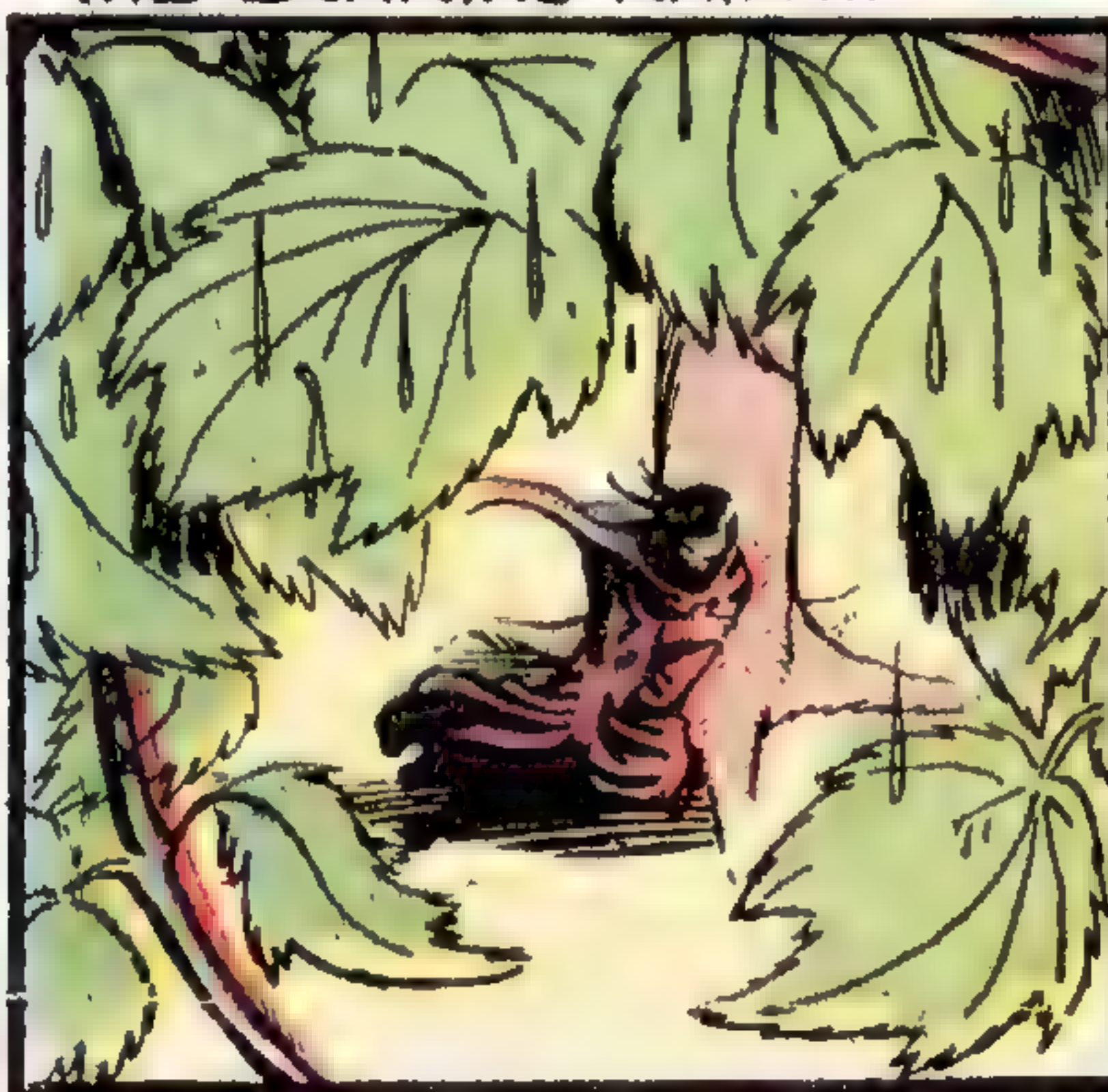
"...THE EARLY SETTLERS GOT A NOTION THAT ONE OF THEIR WOMEN-FOLK WAS HAVING TRUCK WITH BLACK MAGIC! SHE WAS SICK WITH FEVER WHEN THEY DRAGGED HER FROM BED, BUT THEIR HEARTS WERE SET HARD AGAINST HER, AND THEY CAST HER OUT...



...AS SHE RAN THROUGH THE FOREST, A TERRIBLE STORM BLEW UP...

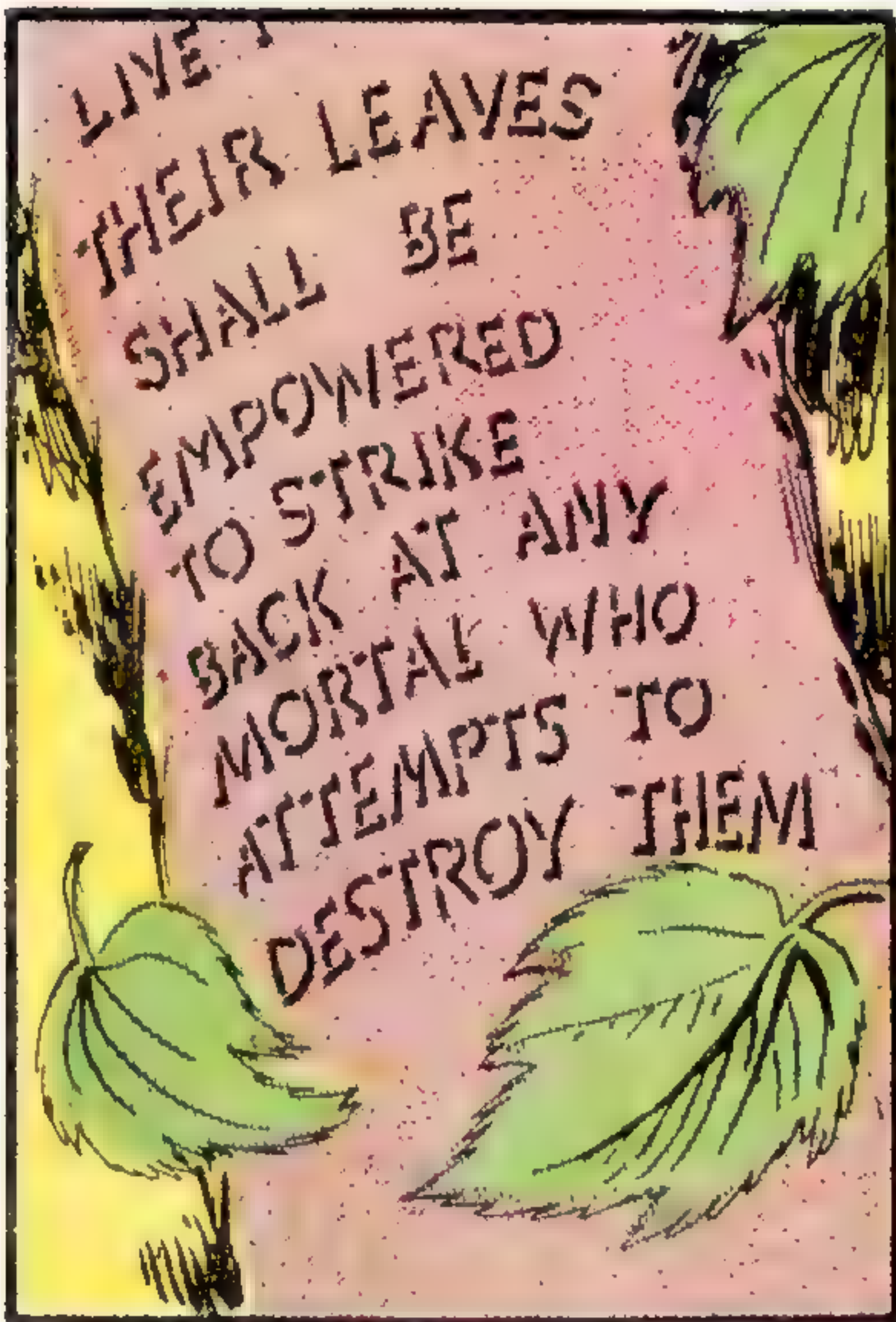
BUT THE MAPLE TREES WHERE SHE TOOK SHELTER, WERE THICK WITH LEAVES AND THEY WERE LIKE AN UMBRELLA... THEY SPARED HER FROM THE FULL FORCE OF THE BITING WIND AND THE SOAKING RAIN...

NOBODY EVER SAW HER FROM THAT TIME ON! BUT THE VERY NEXT MAN TO COME AMONG THOSE TREES, FOUND THE CARVING...



"FOR GRANTING ME SHELTER, THESE MAPLES SHALL LIVE FOR-EVER..."



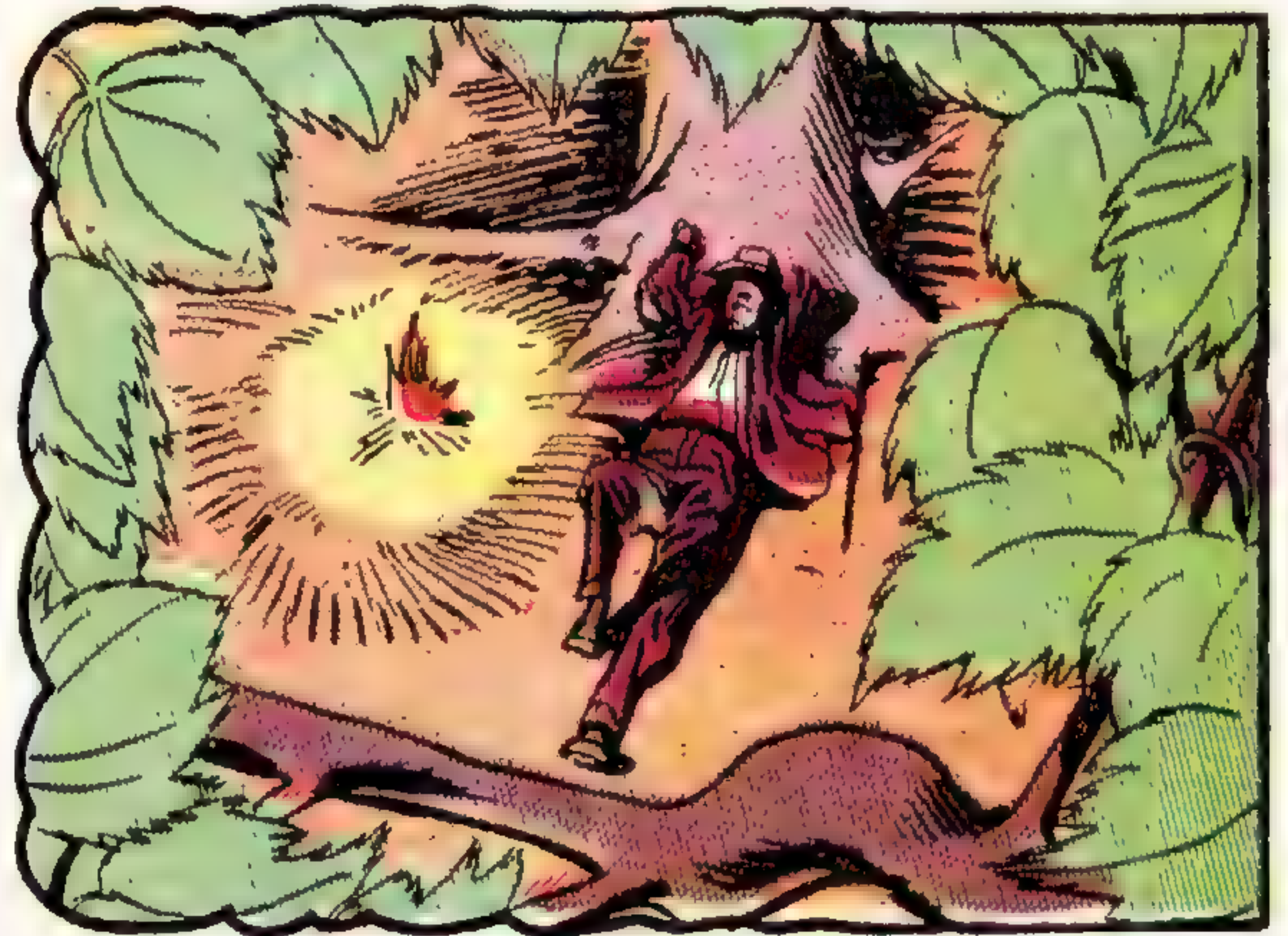
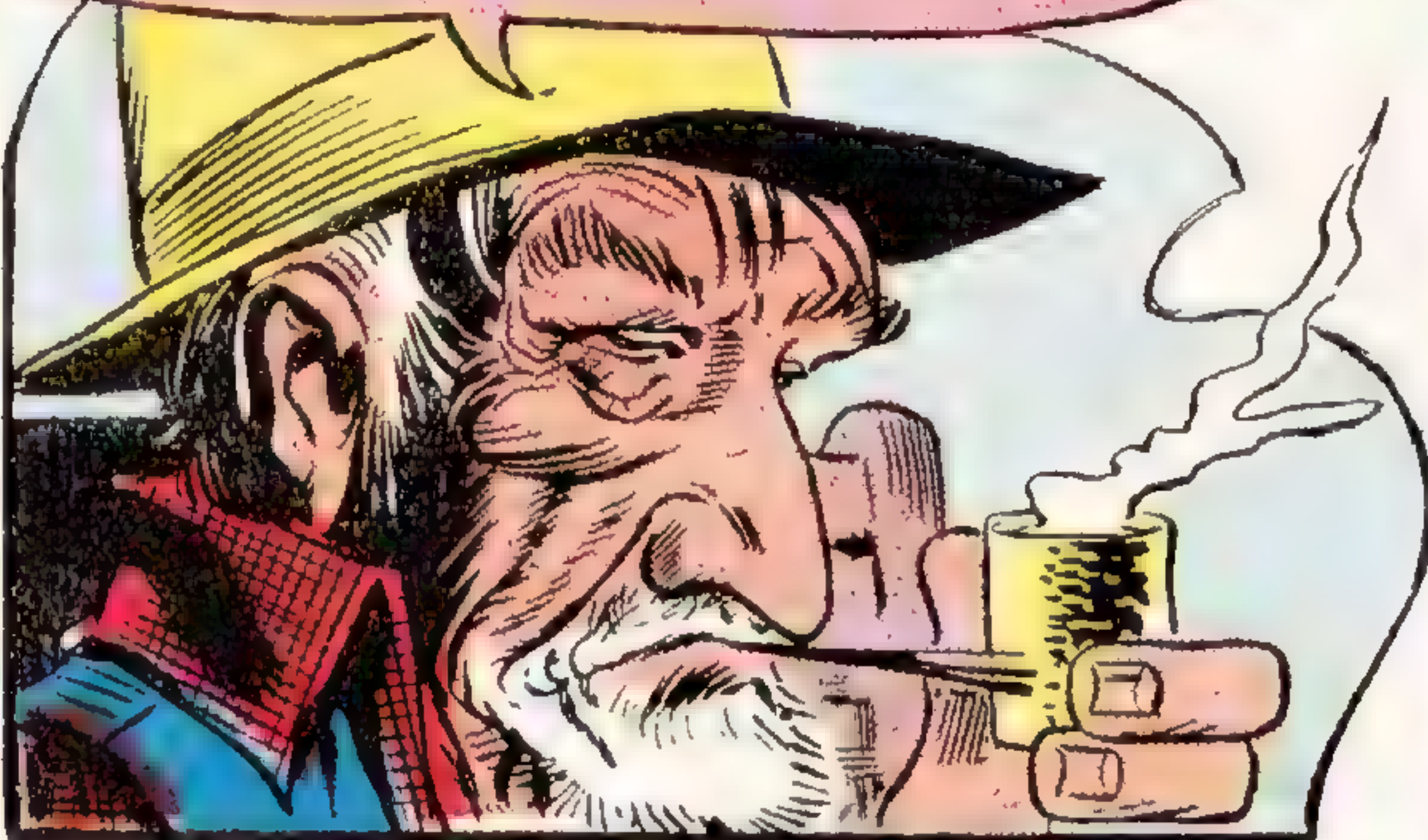


THAT ONE MAN READ IT, AND NO OTHER! FOR WHEN HE CALLED HIS NEIGHBORS TO SEE THE CARVING....

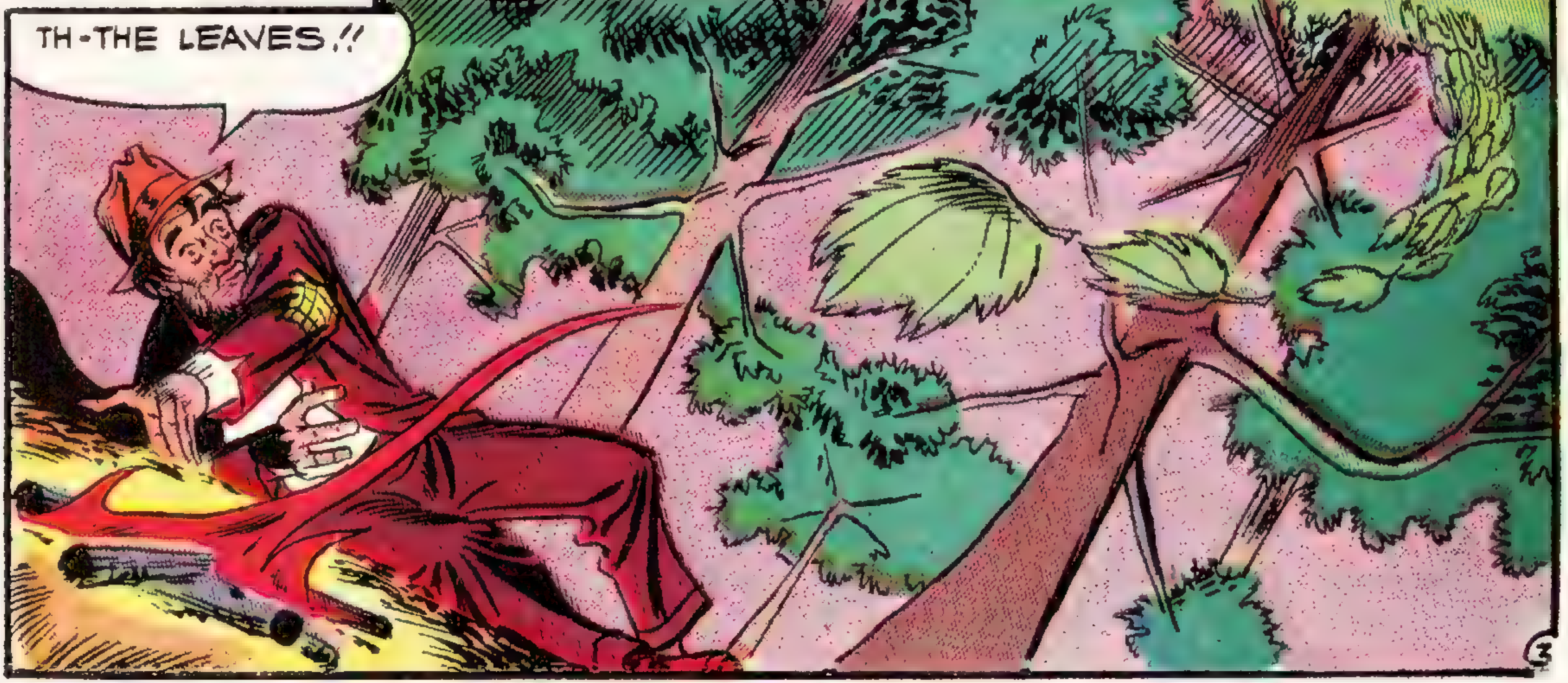


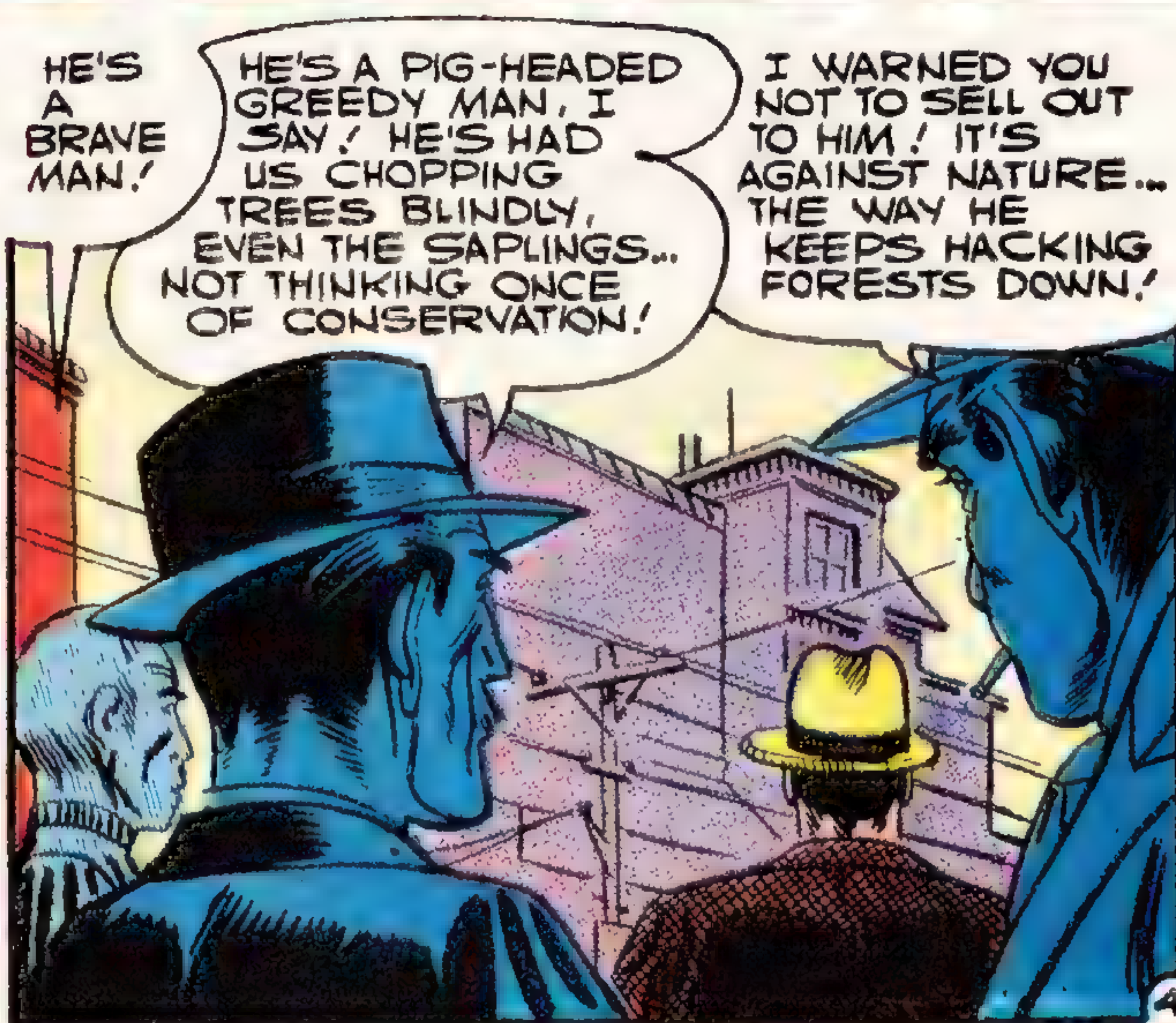
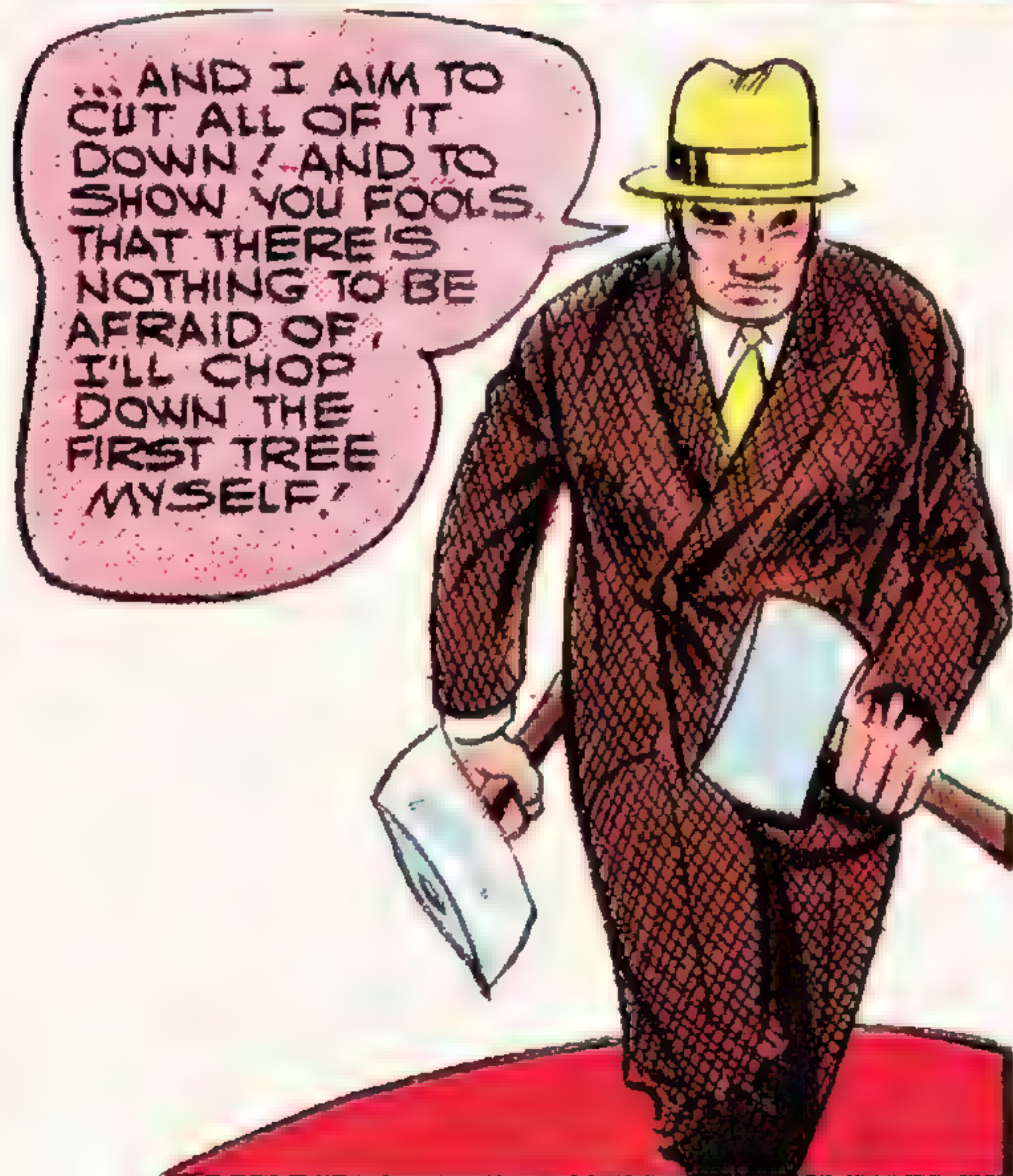
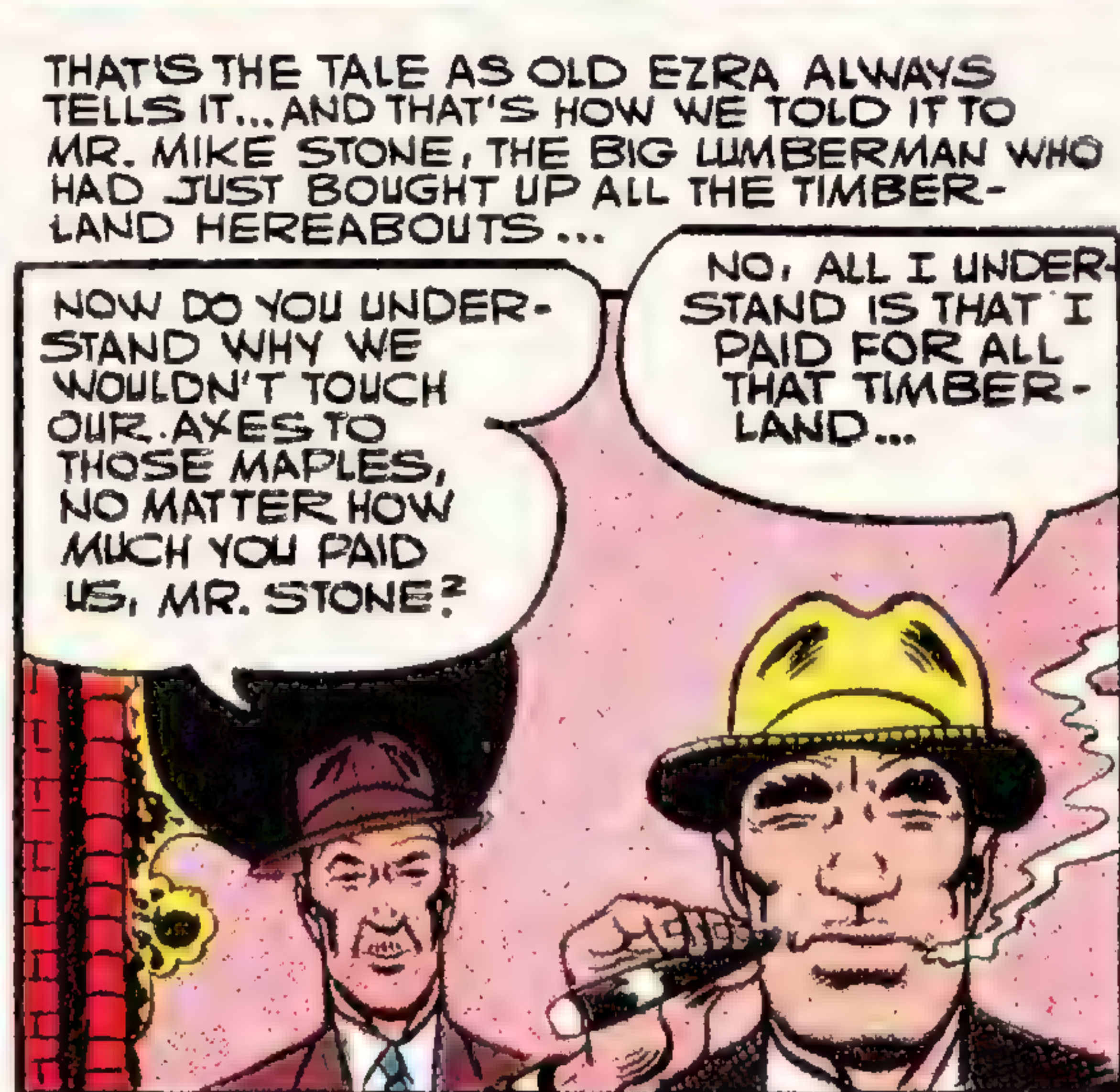
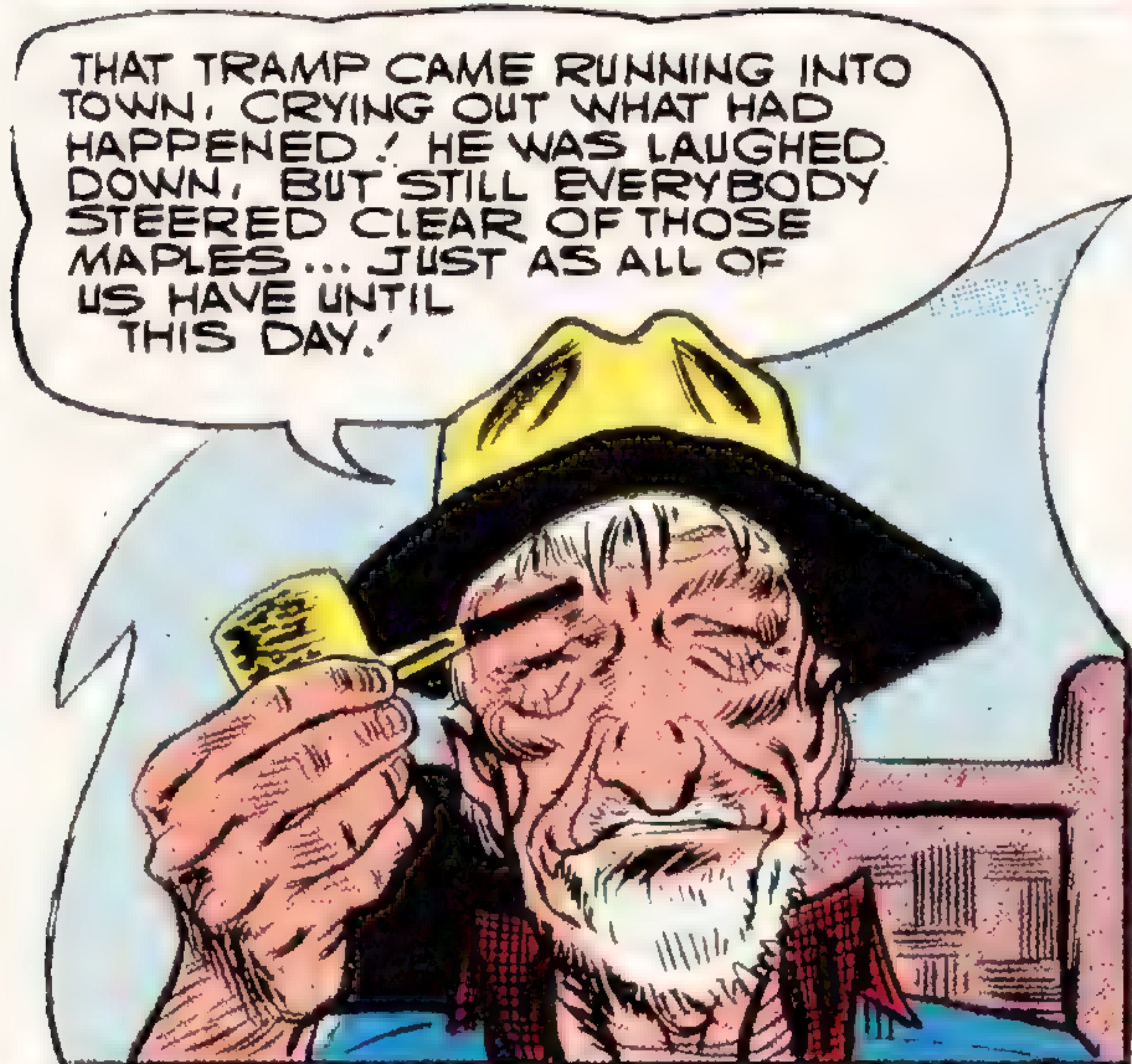
...THEY LAUGHED AT HIM, BUT DEEP IN THEIR HEARTS THE SEEDS OF FEAR HAD BEEN SOWN. AND NOT ONE OF THEM, FROM THAT DAY ON, EVER DARED TOUCH AXE TO THAT STAND OF MAPLES! AFTER THAT, ANOTHER GENERATION CAME AND PASSED ON... AND THEN ANOTHER...

"...UNTIL AT LAST ONE DAY A TRAMP, NEW TO THESE PARTS, FELL ASLEEP AFTER BUILDING A CAMPFIRE RIGHT AMONG THOSE MAPLES! AND THE SPARKS FLEW AND A FIRE STARTED...

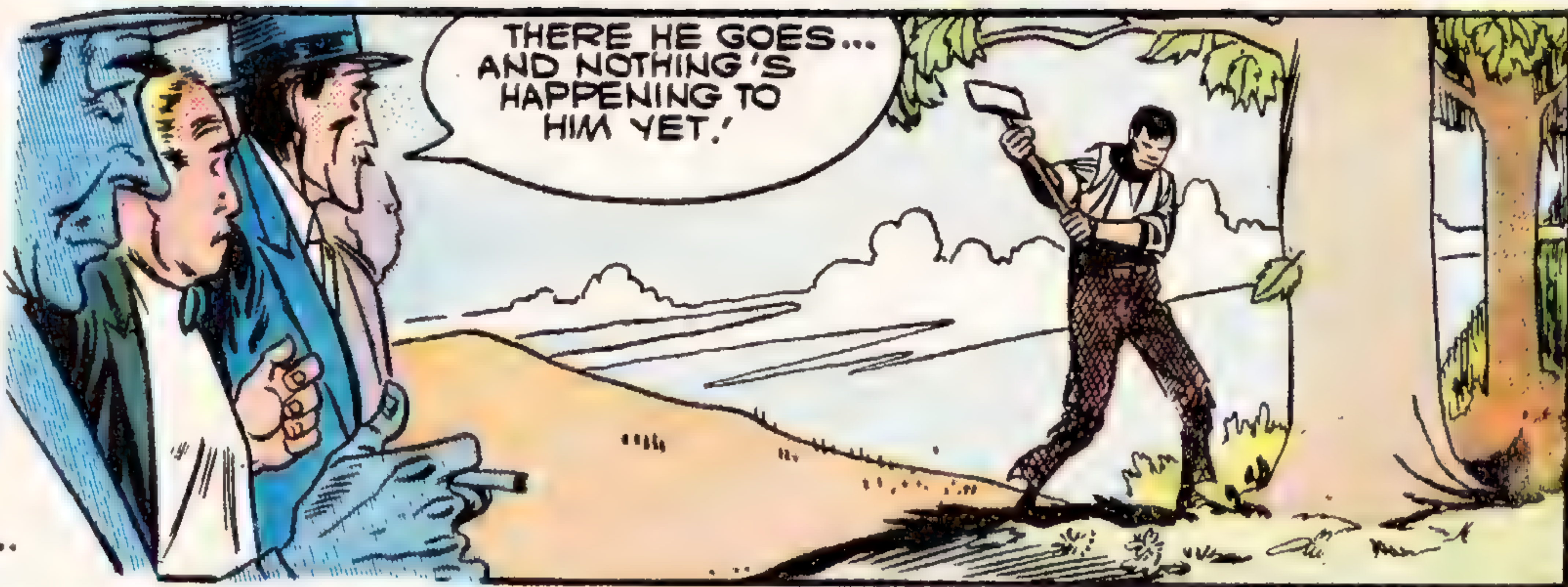


...AND IT WAS THEN THAT THE TRAMP HEARD A STRANGE HISSING AND CRACKLING FROM ABOVE...





WE WATCHED FROM A SAFE DISTANCE AS HE LIFTED HIS AXE FOR THE FIRST STROKE...



THERE HE GOES... AND NOTHING'S HAPPENING TO HIM YET!

HEY!



WE COULD SEE HIM SHAKING HIS HEAD AND MUTTERING! THEN HE HEFTED THE SECOND AXE...



...AND THIS TIME...

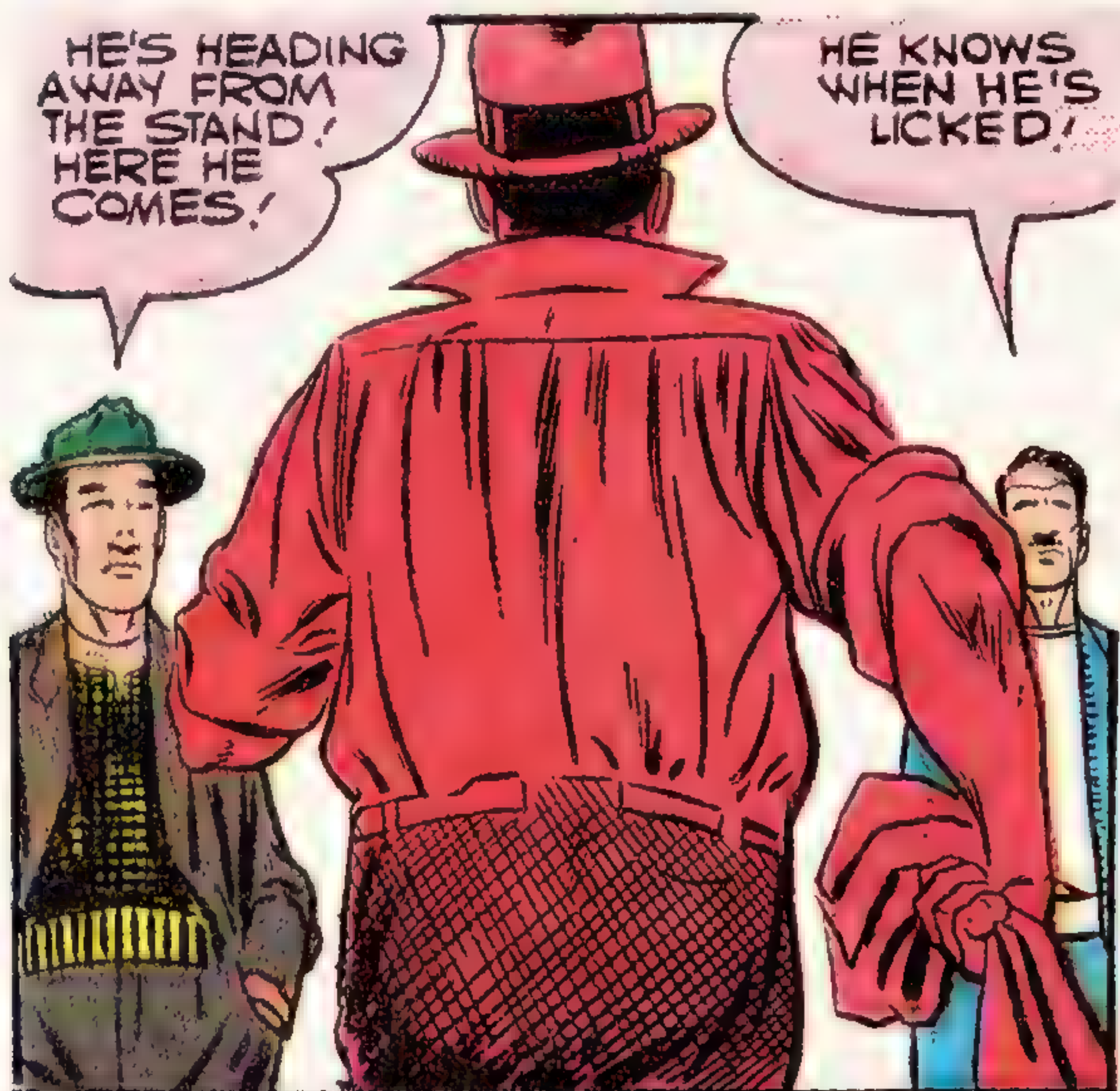
GASP!



HE'S HEADING AWAY FROM THE STAND! HERE HE COMES!

HE KNOWS WHEN HE'S LICKED!

MIKE STONE'S NEVER LICKED! I'M GOING TO TOWN FOR DYNAMITE! I AIM TO BLAST THOSE MAPLES DOWN!



SO INTO TOWN HE WENT! AND AFTER ARRANGING FOR ENOUGH DYNAMITE TO BLAST TEN FORESTS OFF THE FACE OF THE EARTH ...

TOO LATE TO GO BACK TODAY! THINK I'LL BUY ME A SUIT... JUST TO SHOW THE TOWNSPEOPLE THAT I HAVE OTHER THINGS ON MY MIND THAN THAT STAND OF MAPLES!

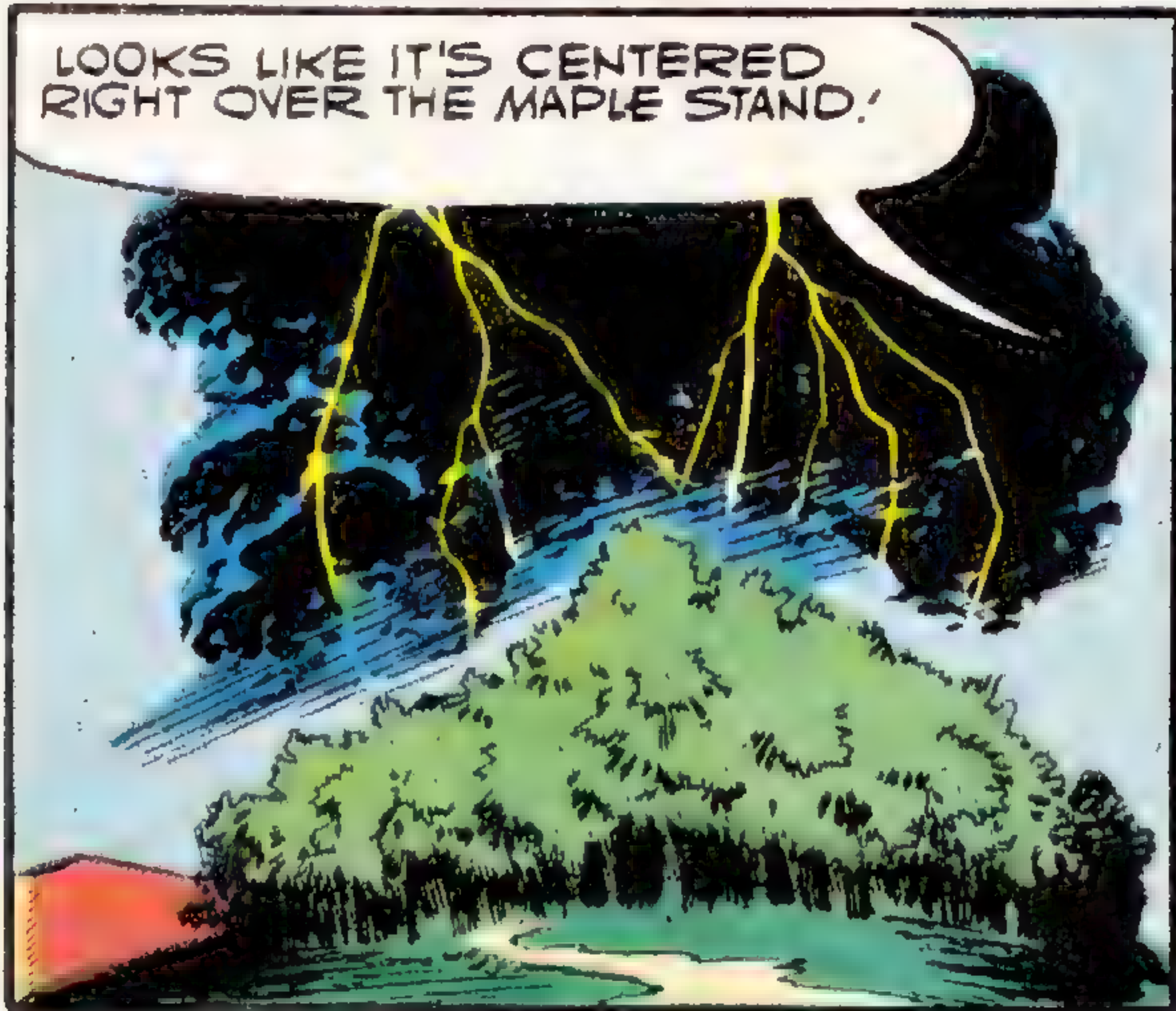


GIVE ME ONE JUST LIKE THAT!



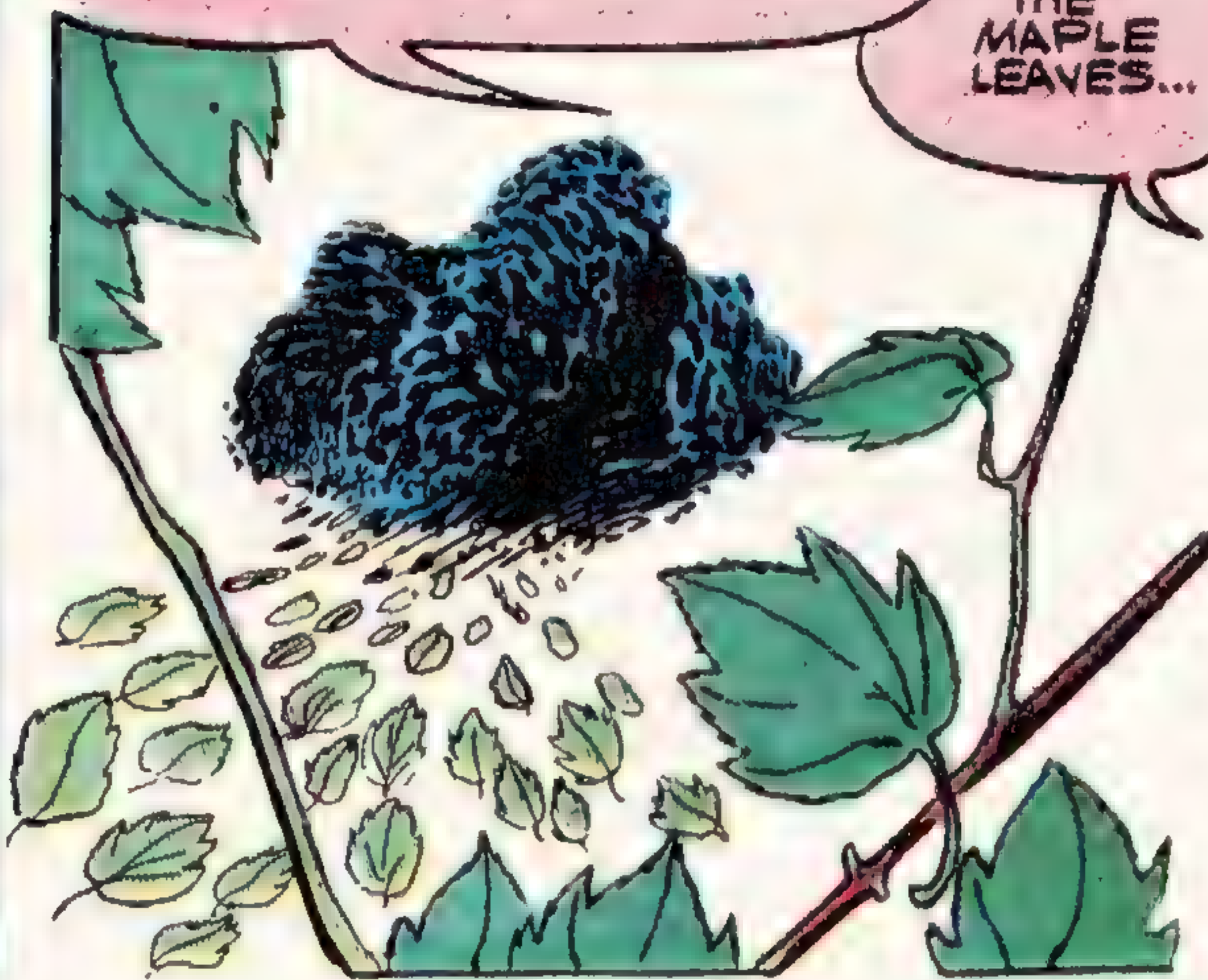
MR. STONE WAS TRYING ON HIS NEW SUIT WHEN SUDDENLY A STORM BLEW UP...

LOOKS LIKE IT'S CENTERED RIGHT OVER THE MAPLE STAND!



WH-WHAT'S THAT BLACK CLOUD RISING UP FROM THE TREES?

COULD IT BE THE MAPLE LEAVES...

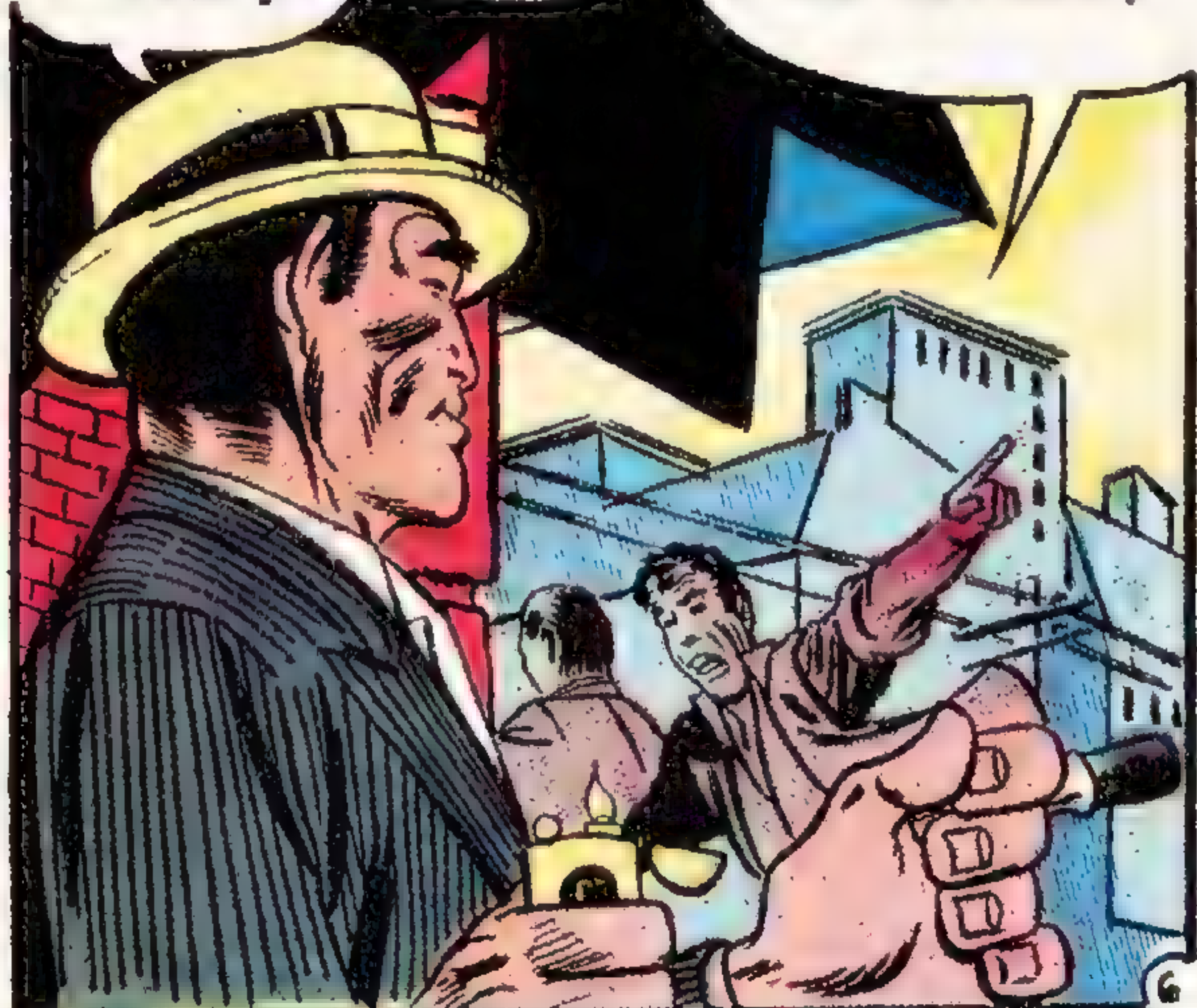


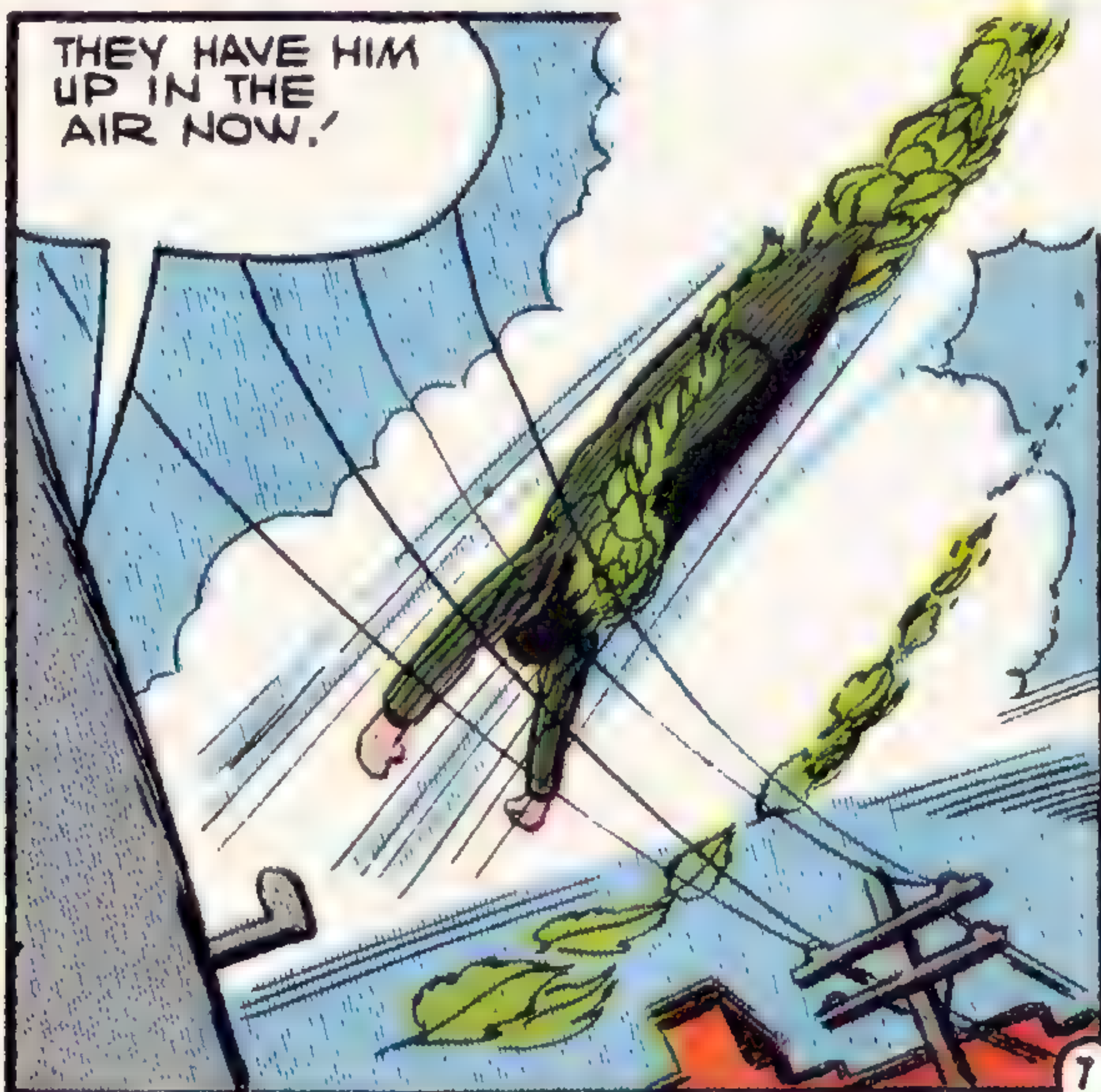
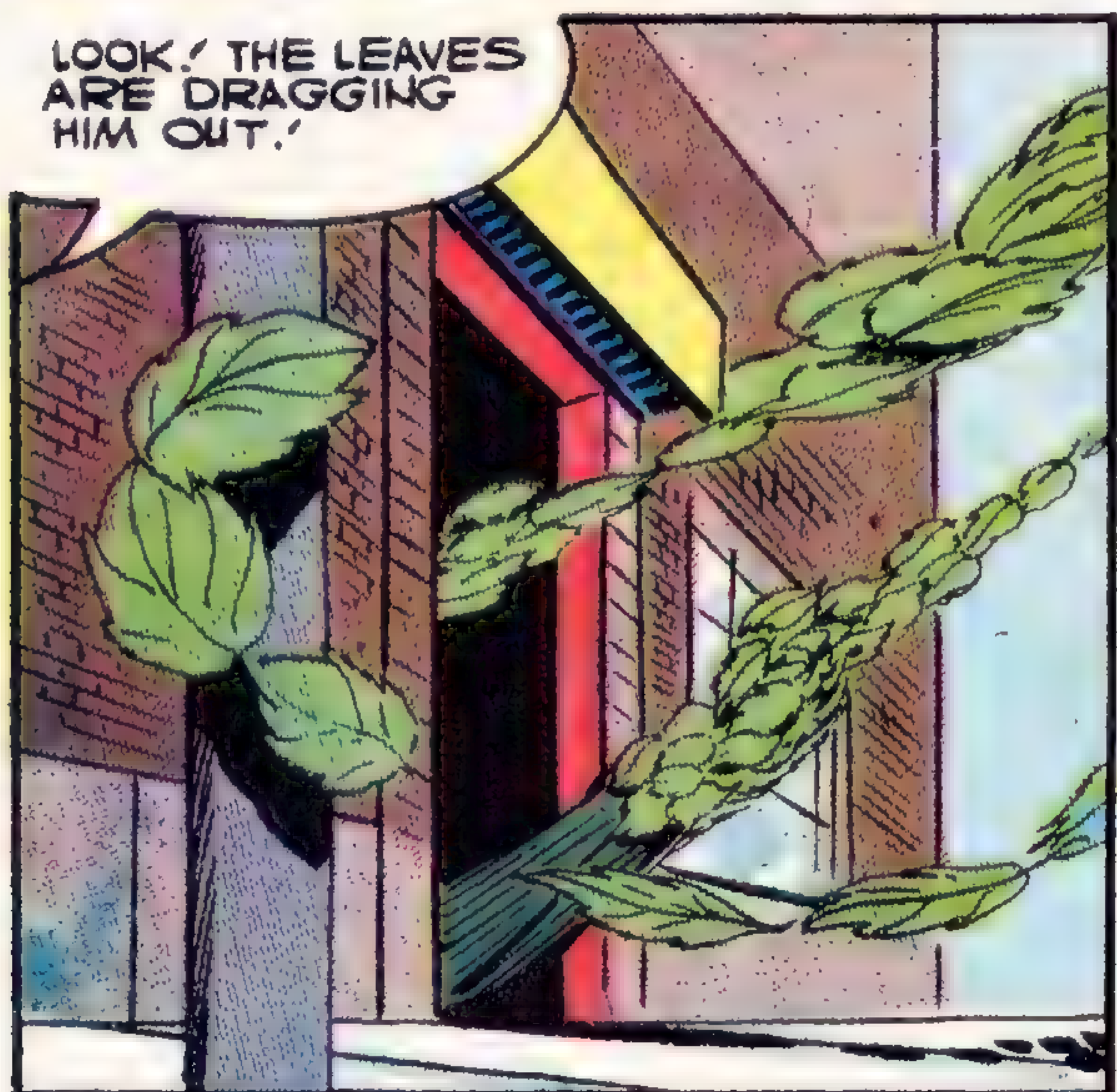
IT IS--AND THEY'RE HEADING FOR TOWN!

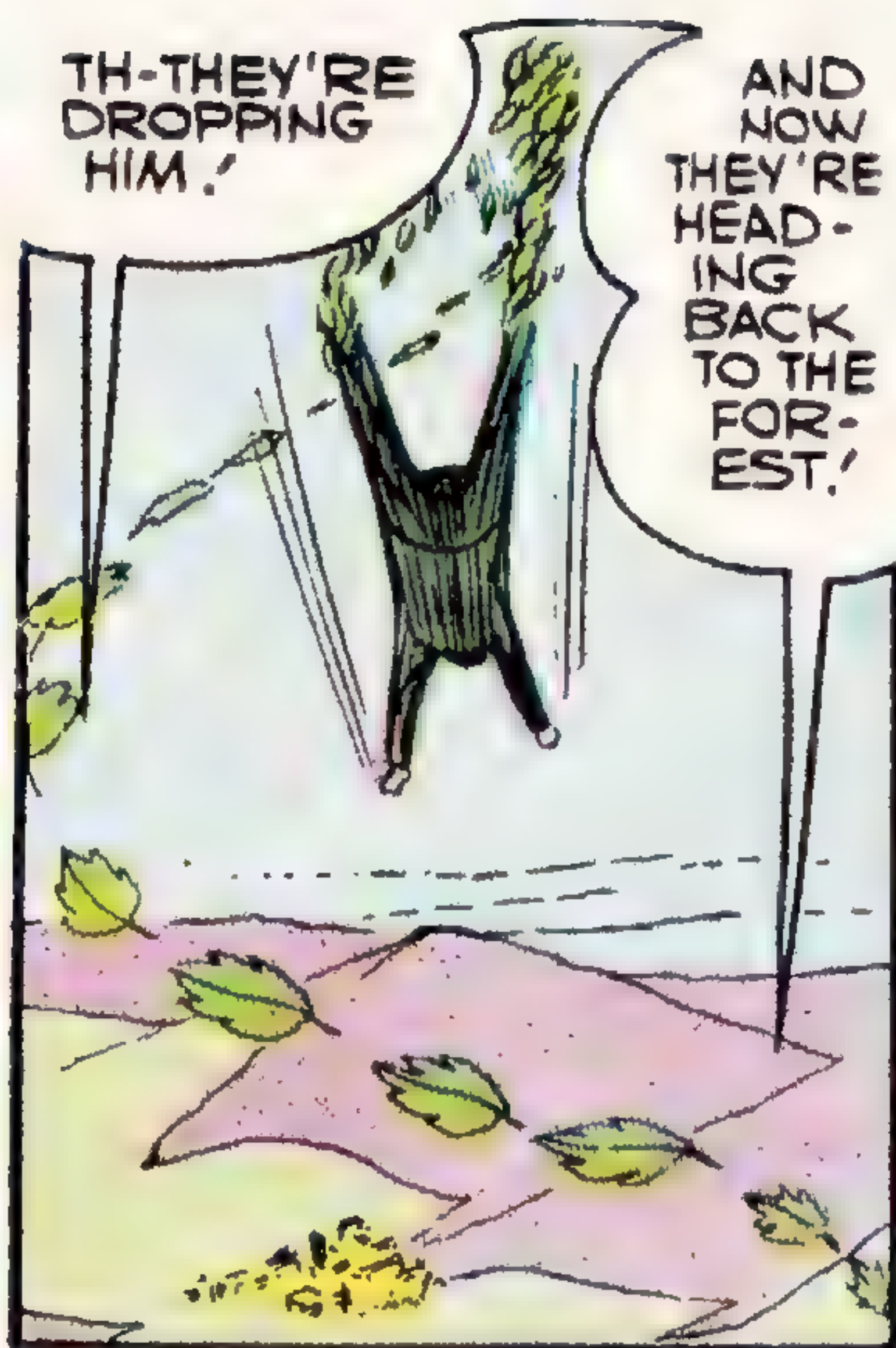


WHAT'S EVERYBODY RUNNING AWAY FOR?

THE LEAVES! DON'T YOU SEE THE LEAVES?







TH-THEY'RE
DROPPING
HIM!

AND
NOW
THEY'RE
HEAD-
ING
BACK
TO THE
FOR-
EST!

HE FELL HARD!
HE'S A GONER
FOR SURE!

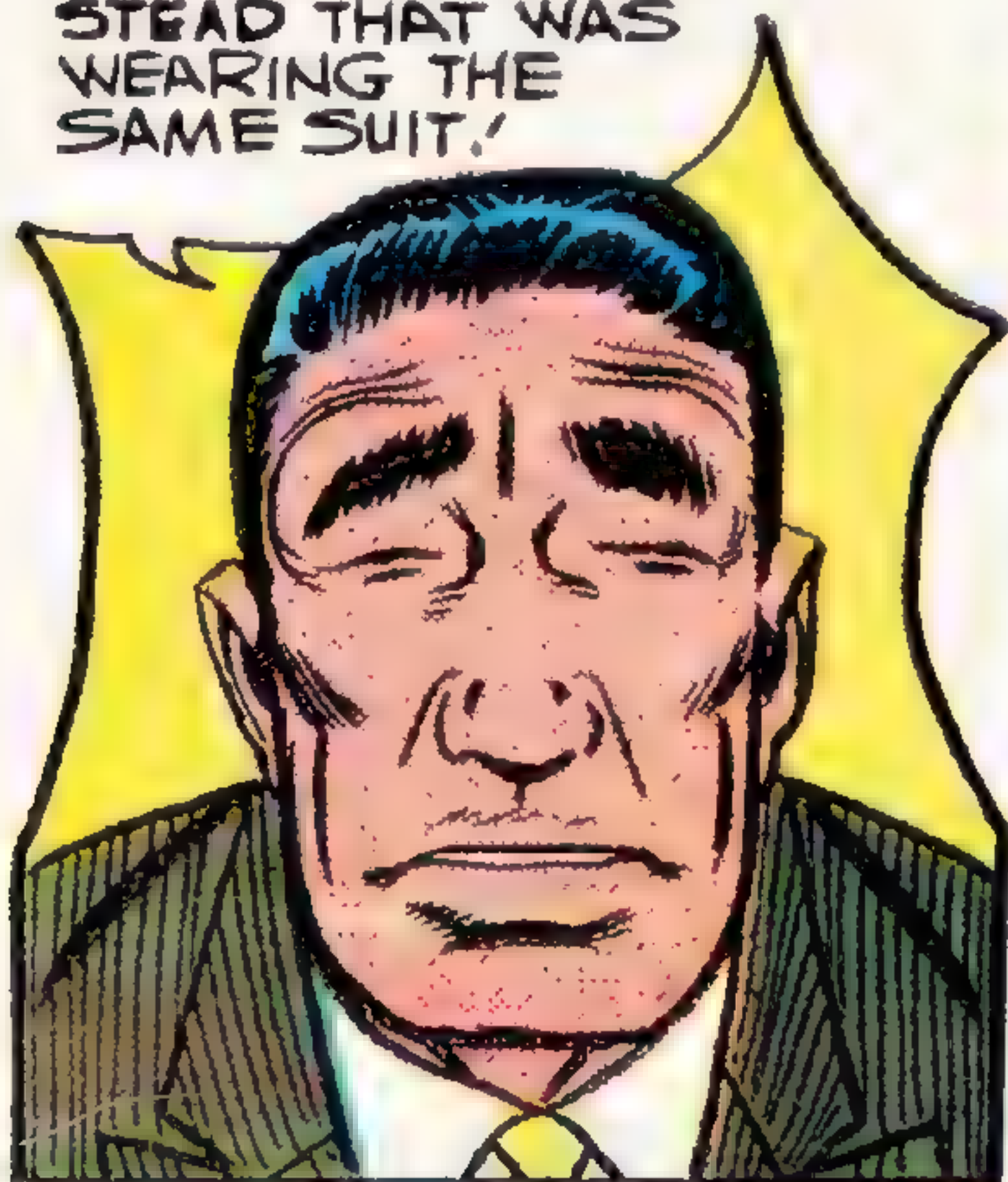
CAN'T
HELP
FEEL-
ING
SORRY
FOR...



HEY!

TH-THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
WE SAW THE LEAVES
DROP YOU OVER
THERE!

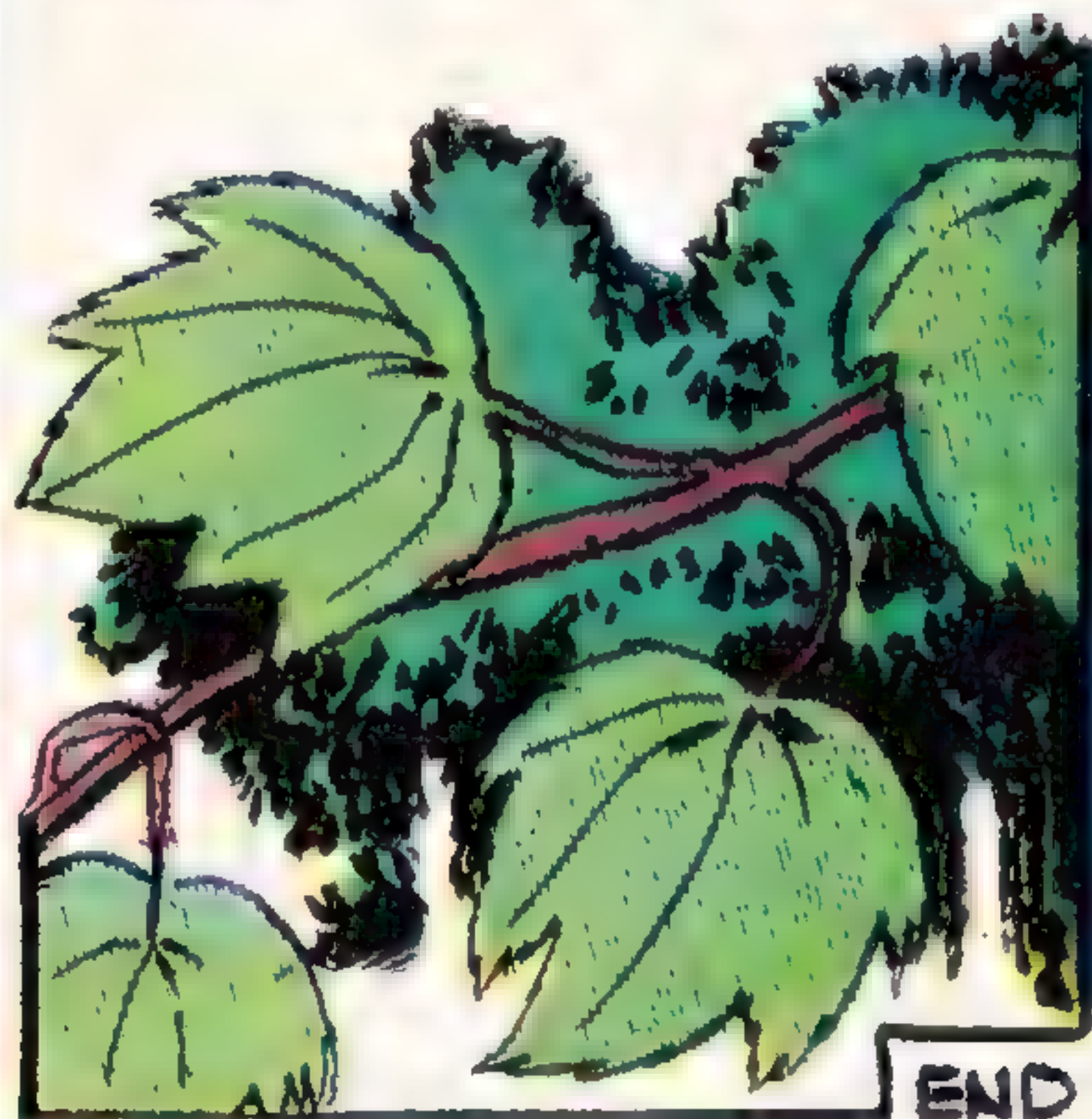
TH-THAT'S WHAT THEY
MEANT TO DO! BUT I
HID UNDER THE COUNTER...
AND THEY DRAGGED
OUT THE DUMMY IN-
STEAD THAT WAS
WEARING THE
SAME SUIT!



I-I'M GETTING AWAY FROM
HERE! I'M (SOB) QUIT-
TING THE LUMBER TRADE!
WHEN'S THE FIRST
TRAIN OUT?



NOBODY HEREABOUTS HAS
EVER SEEN MR. MIKE
STONE AGAIN! AND THAT
STAND OF TREES, THE BIG
MAPLES... NOBODY WILL
EVER LAY AN AXE ON THEM
AGAIN! THAT'S FOR SURE!



END

CDC

UNUSUAL TALES

Extraordinary Stories Never Before Told

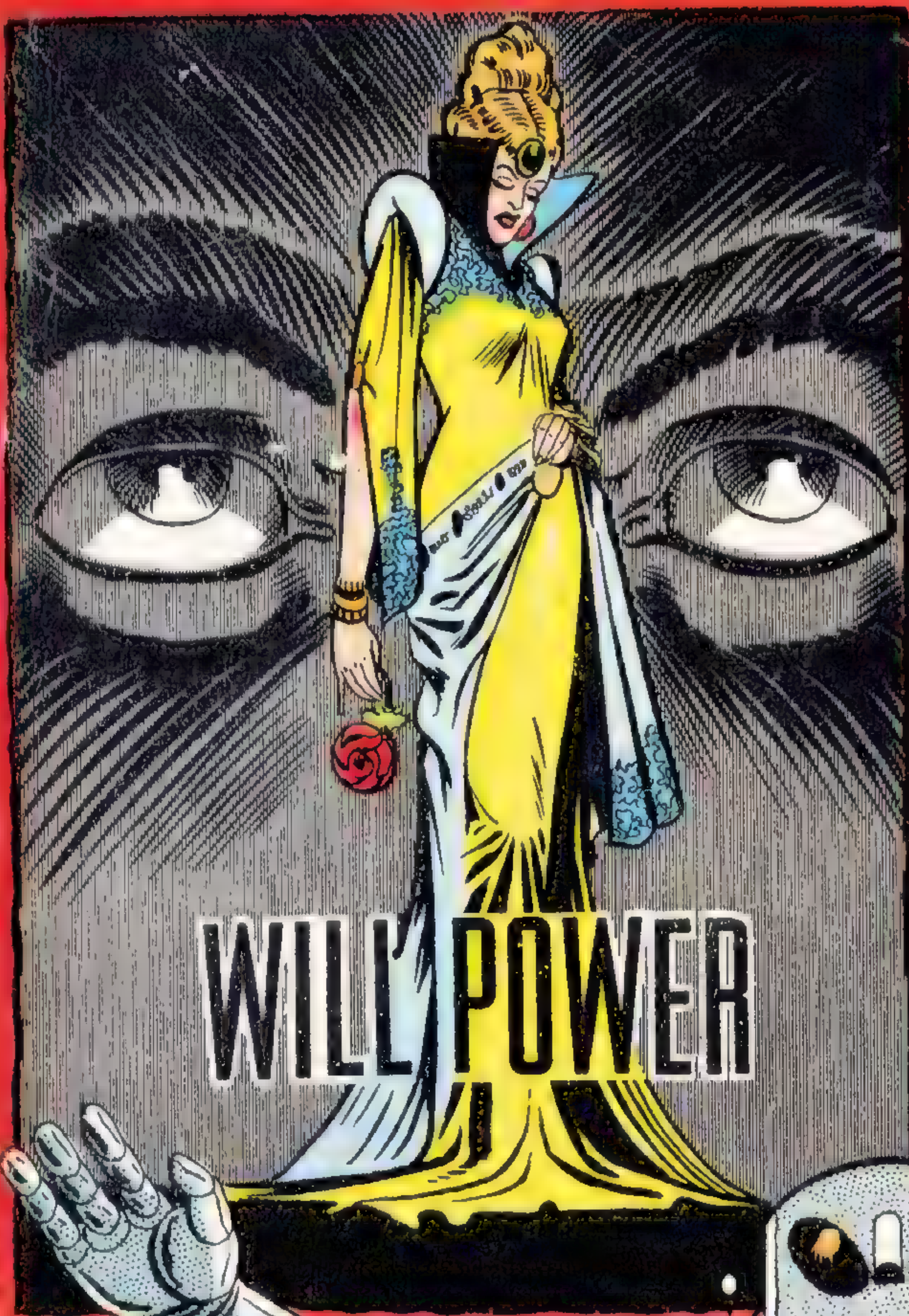
APPROVED
BY THE
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AUTHORITY

UNUSUAL TALES

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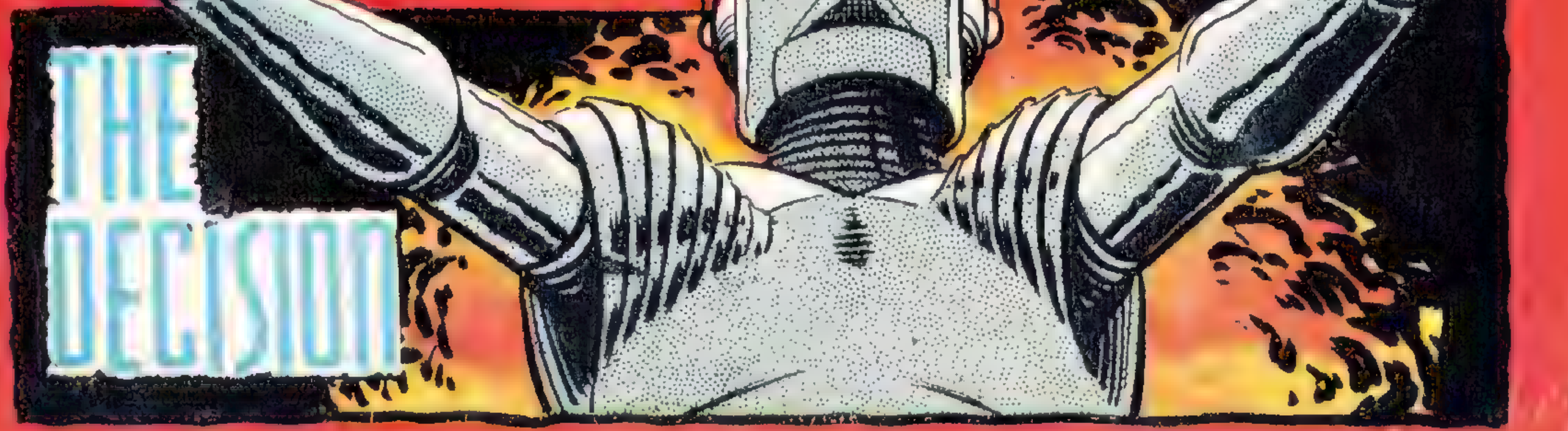
A CHARLTON PUBLICATION



WILL POWER



DITKO



THE
DECISION

WILL POWER

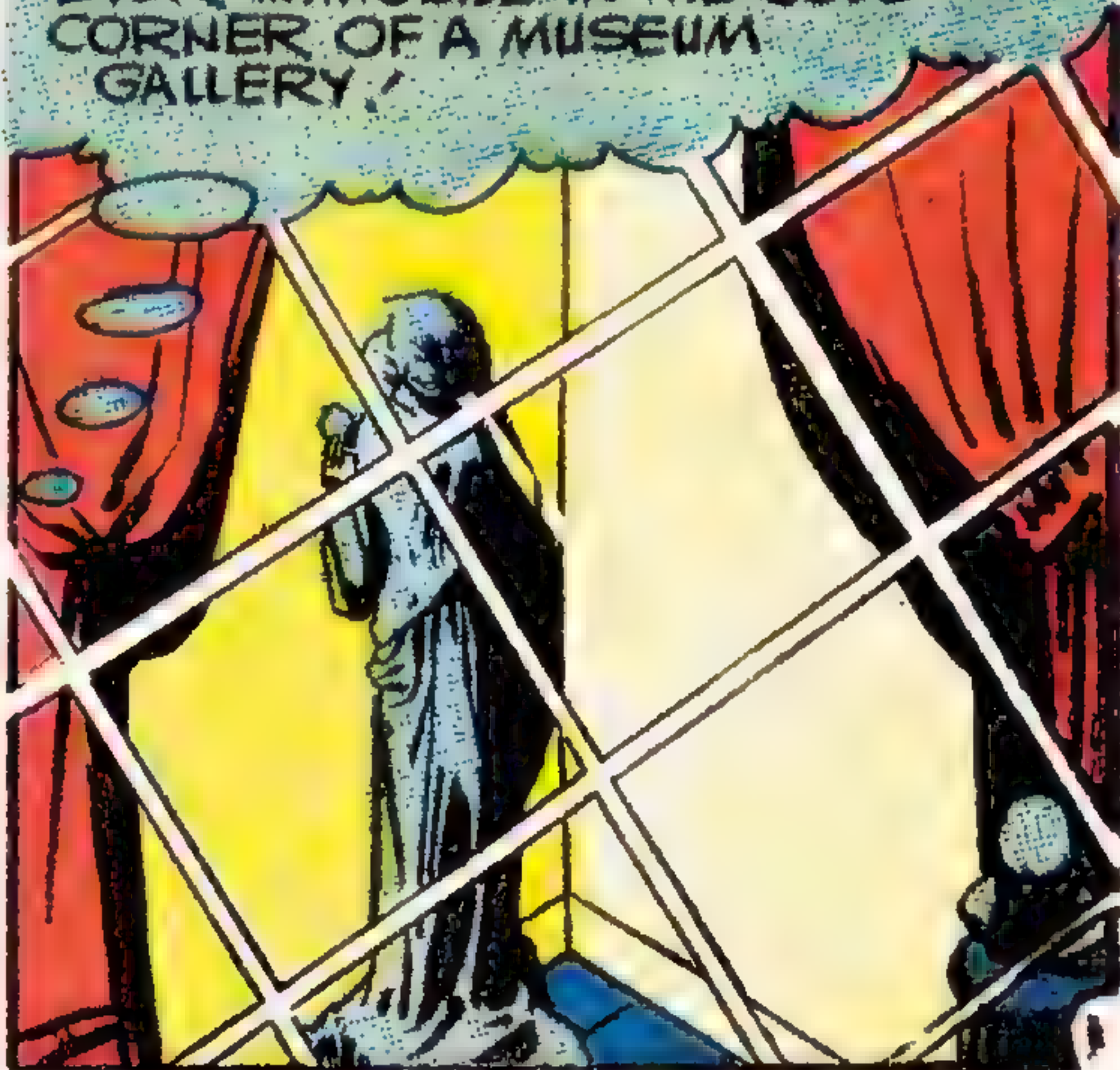
THERE WAS NO WOMAN IN THE WORLD MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN SHE WHO STOOD MOTIONLESS IN THE SHADOWS BEFORE ME! BUT EVEN AS I STARED AT HER, SORROW WAS LIKE A SHARP CHISEL WITHIN ME...

I WAS SORROWFUL THAT ONE SO BEAUTIFUL SHOULD BE ONLY A STATUE...

SHE SHOULD BE MORE THAN COLD MARBLE! SHE SHOULD BE AS WARM AS THE WARMTH HER BEAUTY MAKES OTHERS FEEL WHEN THEY VIEW HER!



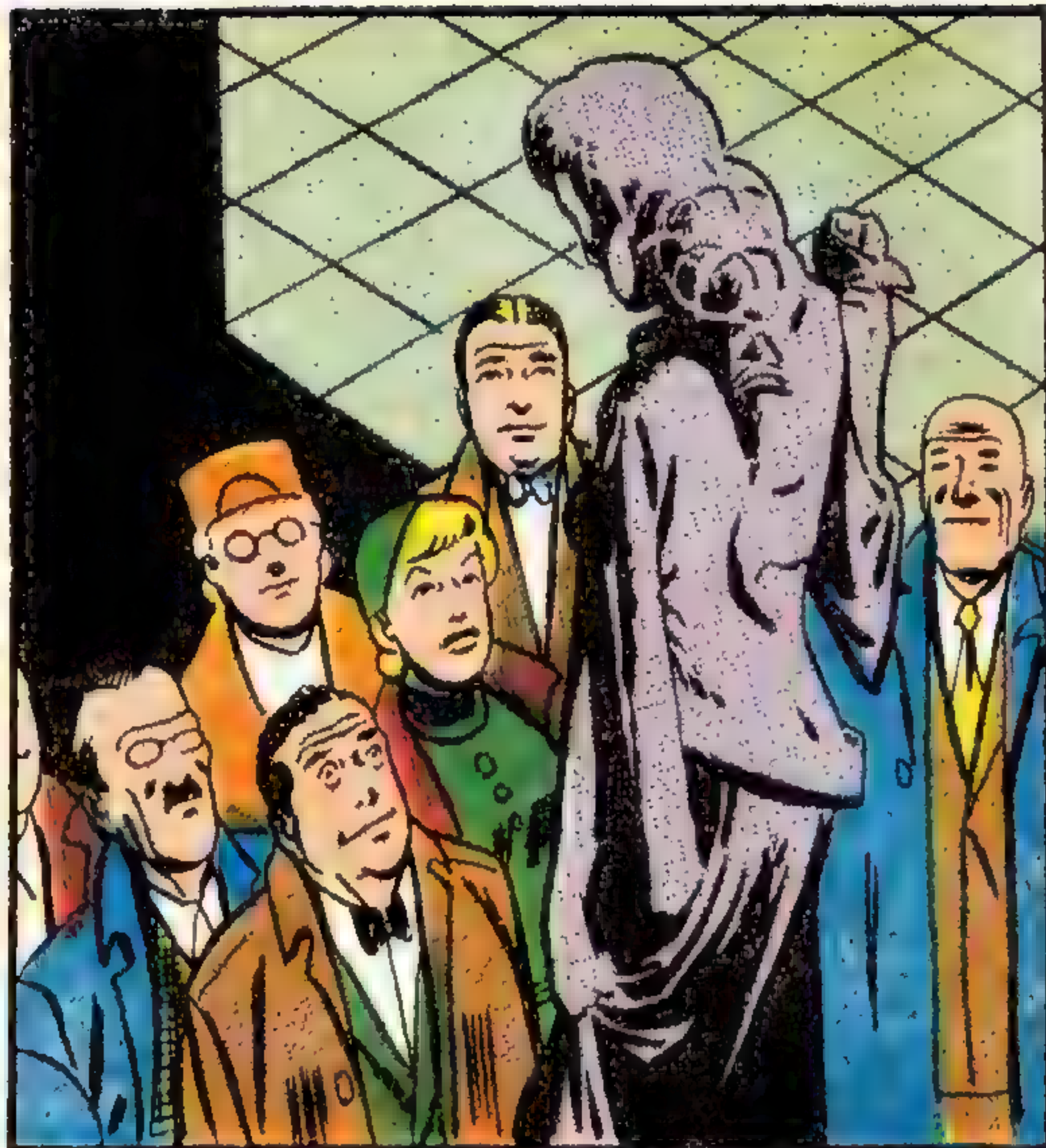
SUCH BEAUTY AS HERS SHOULD BE CAPABLE OF FLUID MOTION... AND NOT BE DOOMED TO STAND FOREVER IMMOBILE IN THE COLD CORNER OF A MUSEUM GALLERY!



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... SUCH BEAUTY SHOULD BE EMPOWERED TO WALK THE WORLD OVER, SO ALL MANKIND MIGHT SEE HER, AND BE ENNOBLED AND ENHEARTENED BY THE SEEING! AND POETS AND MUSICIANS MIGHT SING HER PRAISES...

...BUT THESE WERE IDLE DREAMS! FOR SHE WAS ONLY A STATUE FASHIONED BY SOME OBSCURE CRAFTSMAN OF ANTIQUITY WHO HAD LONG CRUMBLLED INTO DUST! ONLY A STATUE SEEN BY THE FEW INSTEAD OF THE MULTITUDES... AND BY ME...



BUT THEN ONE DAY, A MEANS OCCURRED TO ME OF MAKING THOSE DREAMS LESS IDLE...

WILL POWER! I HAVE HEARD PEOPLE SPEAK OF THE STRANGE FEATS EFFECTED BY WILL POWER WHEN REINFORCED BY LOVE FOR ANOTHER!



I HAVE LOVED HER AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER! WHAT IF I GATHERED TOGETHER EVERY OUNCE OF WILL POWER IN MY BEING... WHAT IF I TRIED TO WILL HER TO LIFE?

AND SO....



SLOWLY... SLOWLY... A VIBRANT FLUSH SPREAD OVER WHAT HAD FOR SO LONG BEEN ONLY COLD MARBLE...



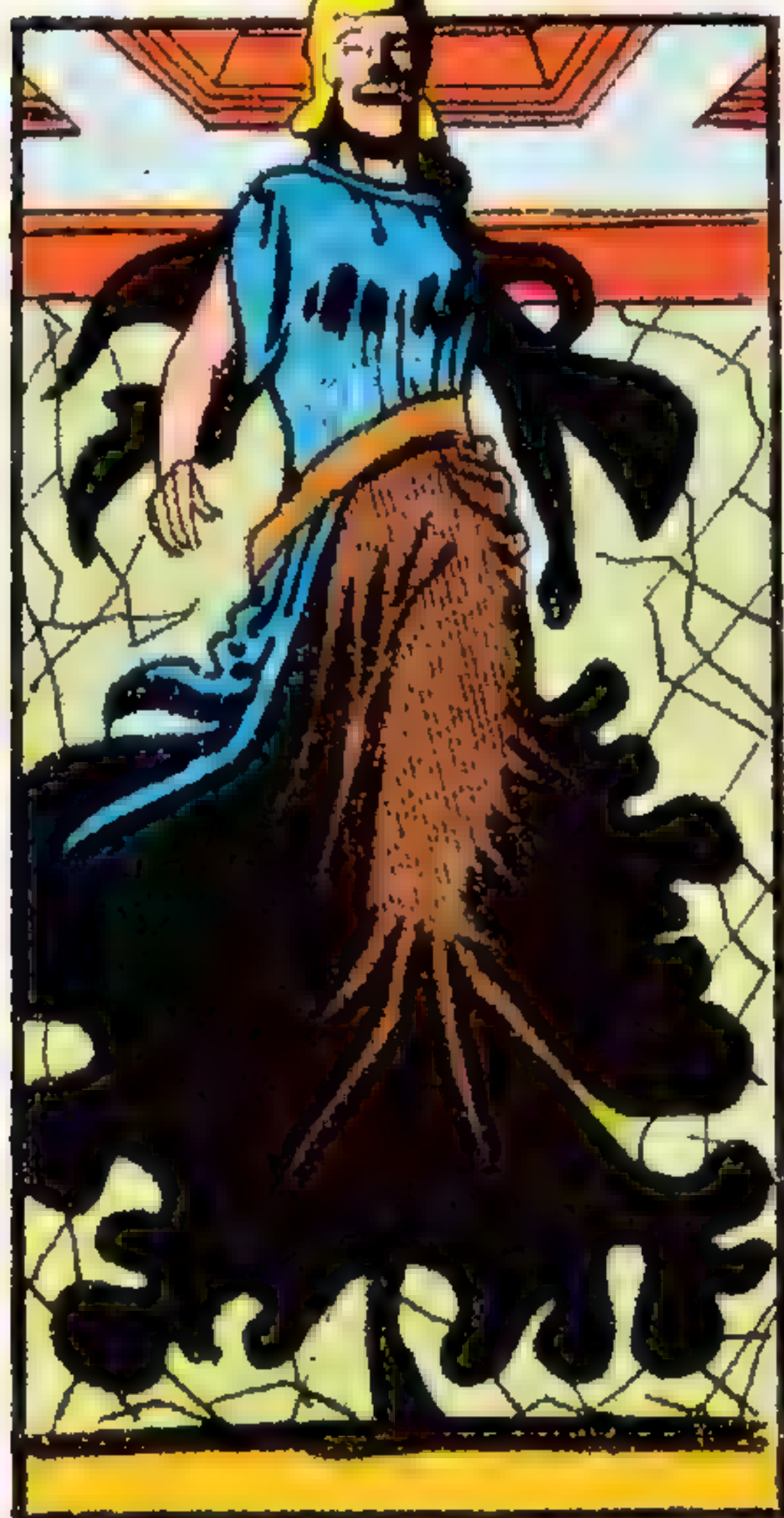
PUPILS MATERIALIZED ON WHAT HAD BEEN STONE-BLANK EYES... HER BEAUTIFUL LIPS PARTED IN A WONDERING SMILE...



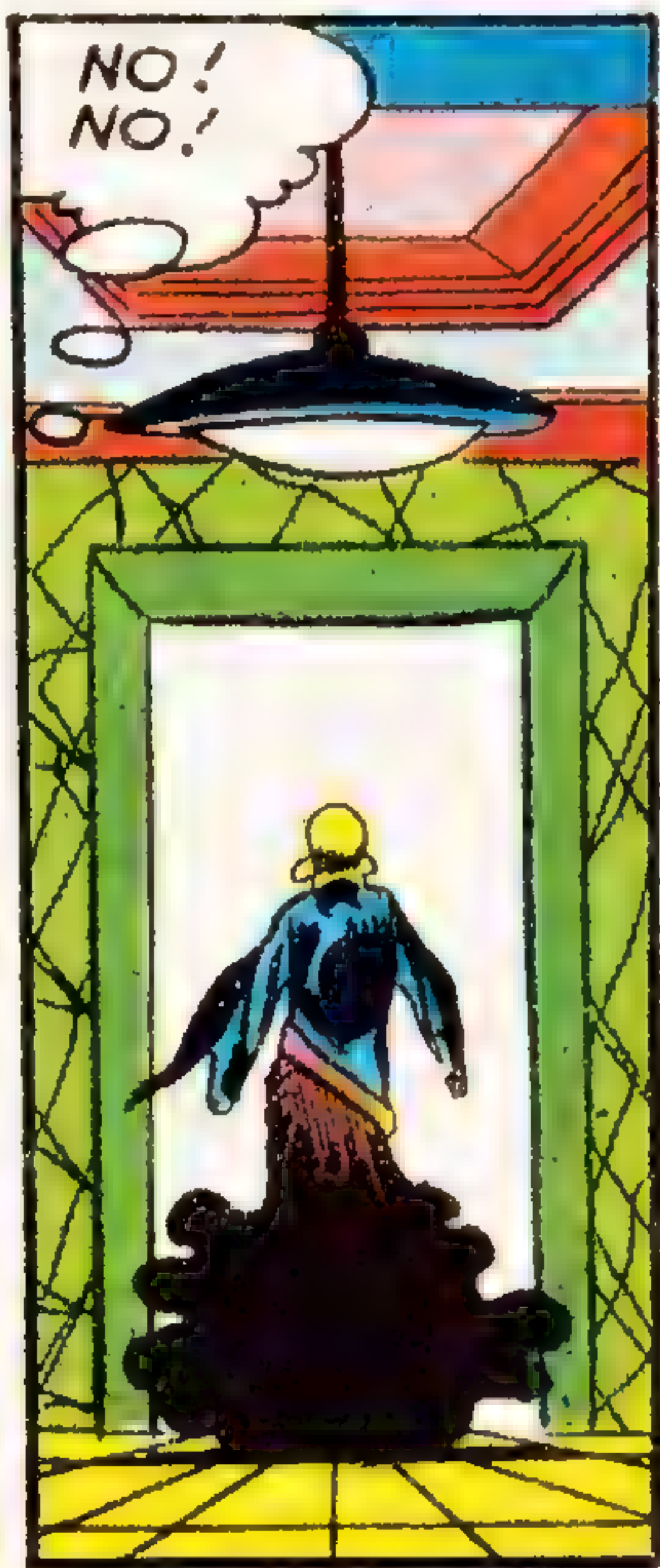
LANGUOROUSLY STRETCHING AND YAWNING, SHE STEPPED DOWN FROM THE PEDESTAL...



NOW SHE WAS WALKING TOWARD ME, EXACTLY AS I HAD ALWAYS DREAMED! IF I COULD HAVE WEPT AT THAT MOMENT, MY EYES WOULD'VE BEEN BLINDED BY TEARS OF JOY...



BUT SHE DID NOT STOP BEFORE ME... SHE WALKED RIGHT BY! I TRIED TO CALL OUT TO HER, BUT MY LIPS WERE SEALED...



AND SO NOW THE GALLERY CORNER IS EMPTY! SHE, WHO WAS BROUGHT TO LIFE BY MY WILL POWER, HAS GONE OUT EAGERLY INTO THE WORLD OF THE LIVING, NEVER TO RETURN! I CAN FEEL SORROW INSIDE ME AGAIN, AND I SHALL FEEL THE PAIN FOREVER...

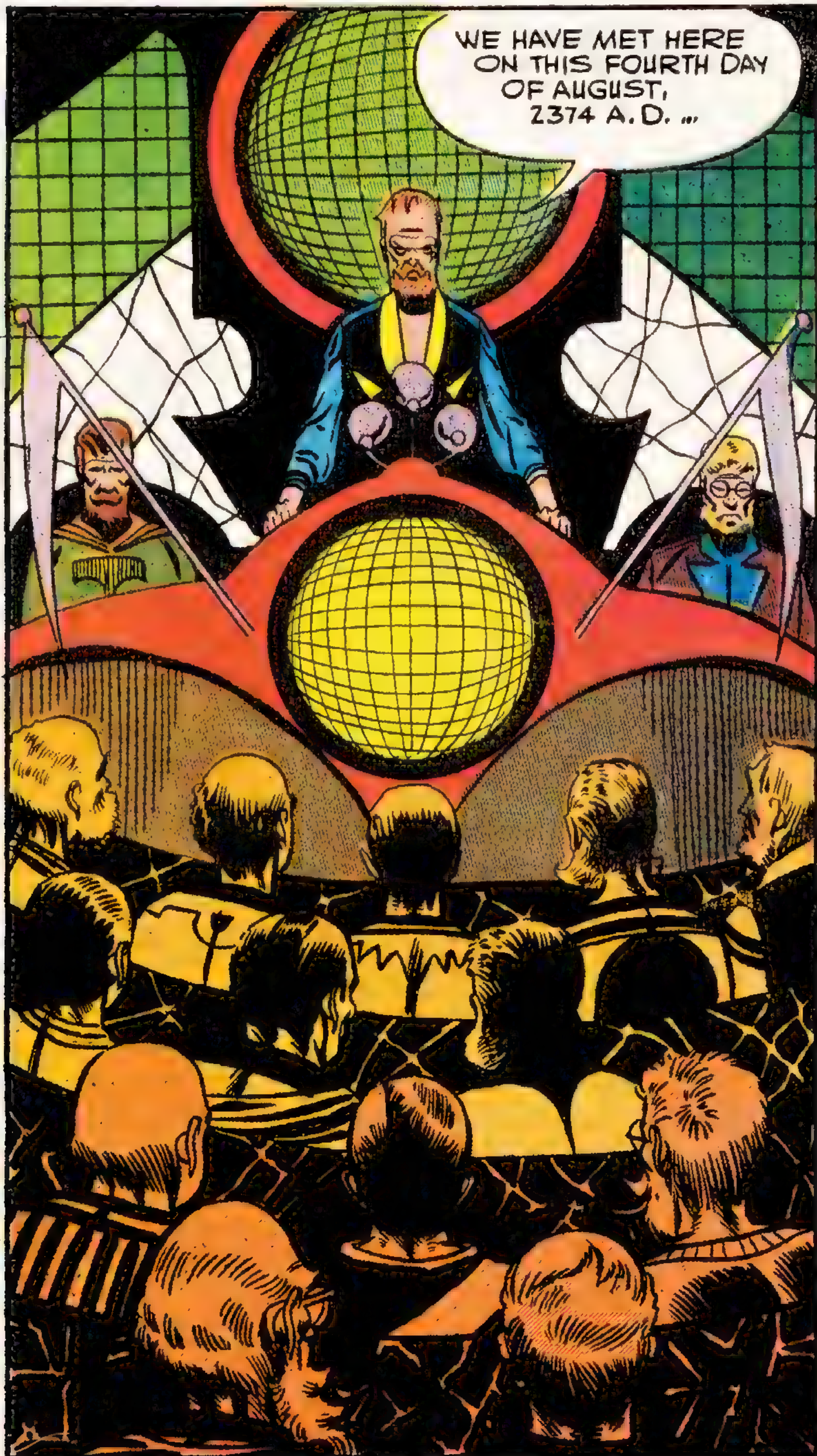


...FOR WHO IS LEFT TO WILL ME TO LIFE, NOW THAT SHE HAS GONE?!

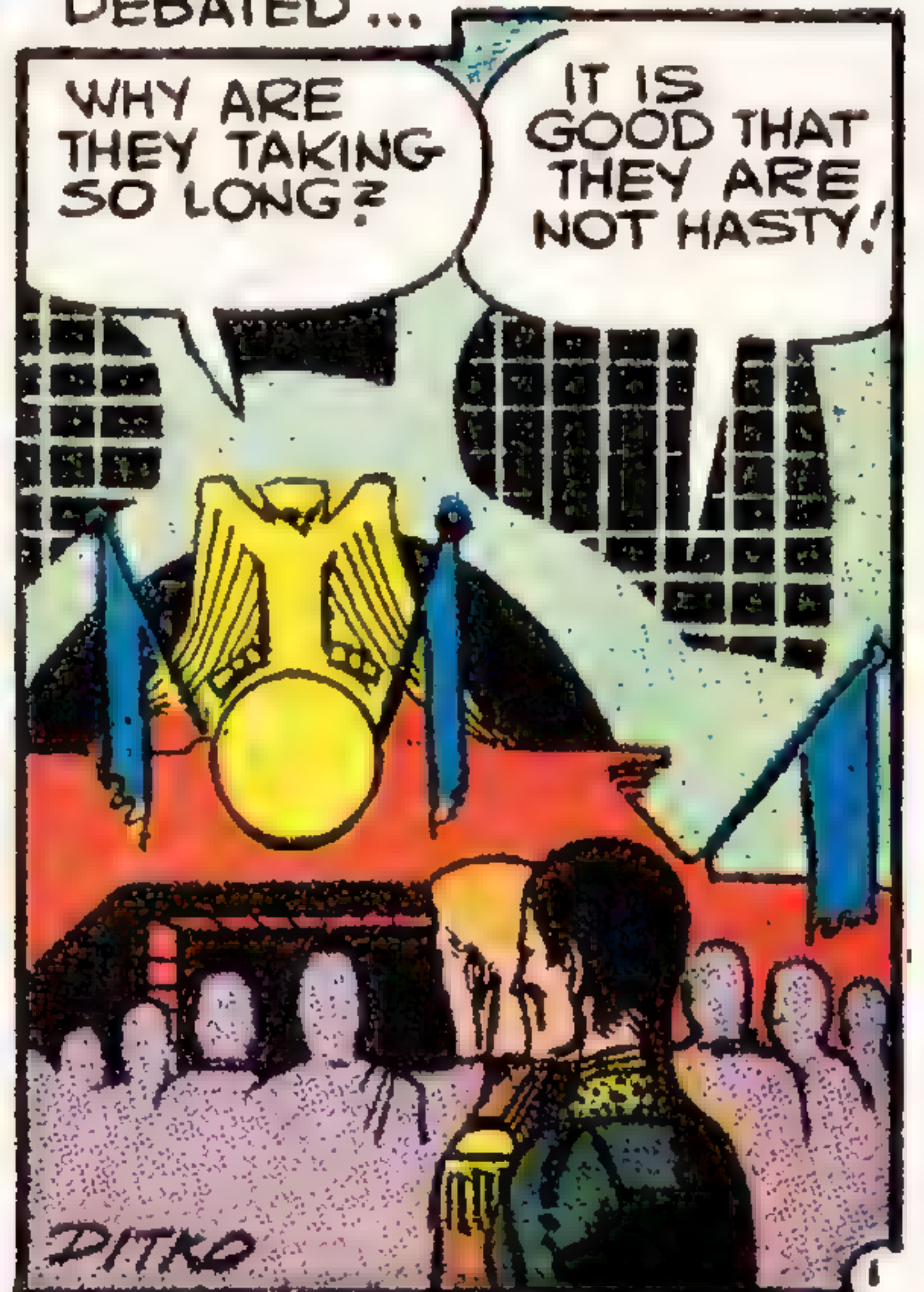


THE DECISION

THEY WERE THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF ALL THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD! THEIRS WERE THE KEENEST MINDS OF THE UNIVERSE... THEY REPRESENTED A LIVING COMPENDIUM OF ALL EXTANT KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM ...



THE MULTITUDES WAITED TENSELY AS THE SAGES DEBATED ...

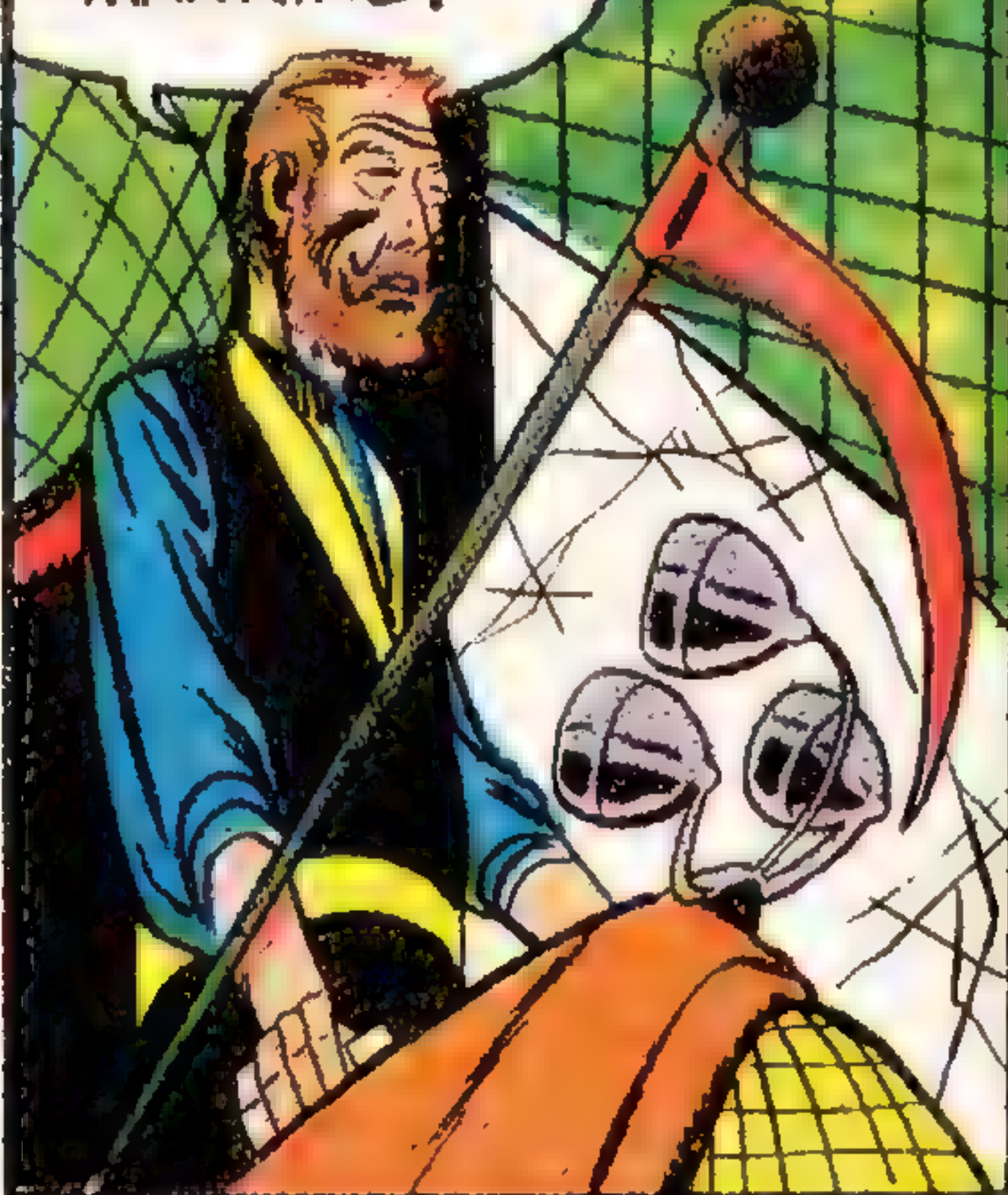


...THE DECISIONS OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL AFFECT ALL MANKIND! THEY HAVE NEVER MADE A WRONG DECISION YET! LET US HOPE THEY NEVER WILL!



AT LAST A VOTE WAS TAKEN..

OUR DECISION IS U-NANIMOUS! MODEL XT 314, A THOUSAND UNITS OF WHICH HAVE ALREADY BEEN MANUFACTURED, IS HEREBY DECLARED A MENACE TO MANKIND!



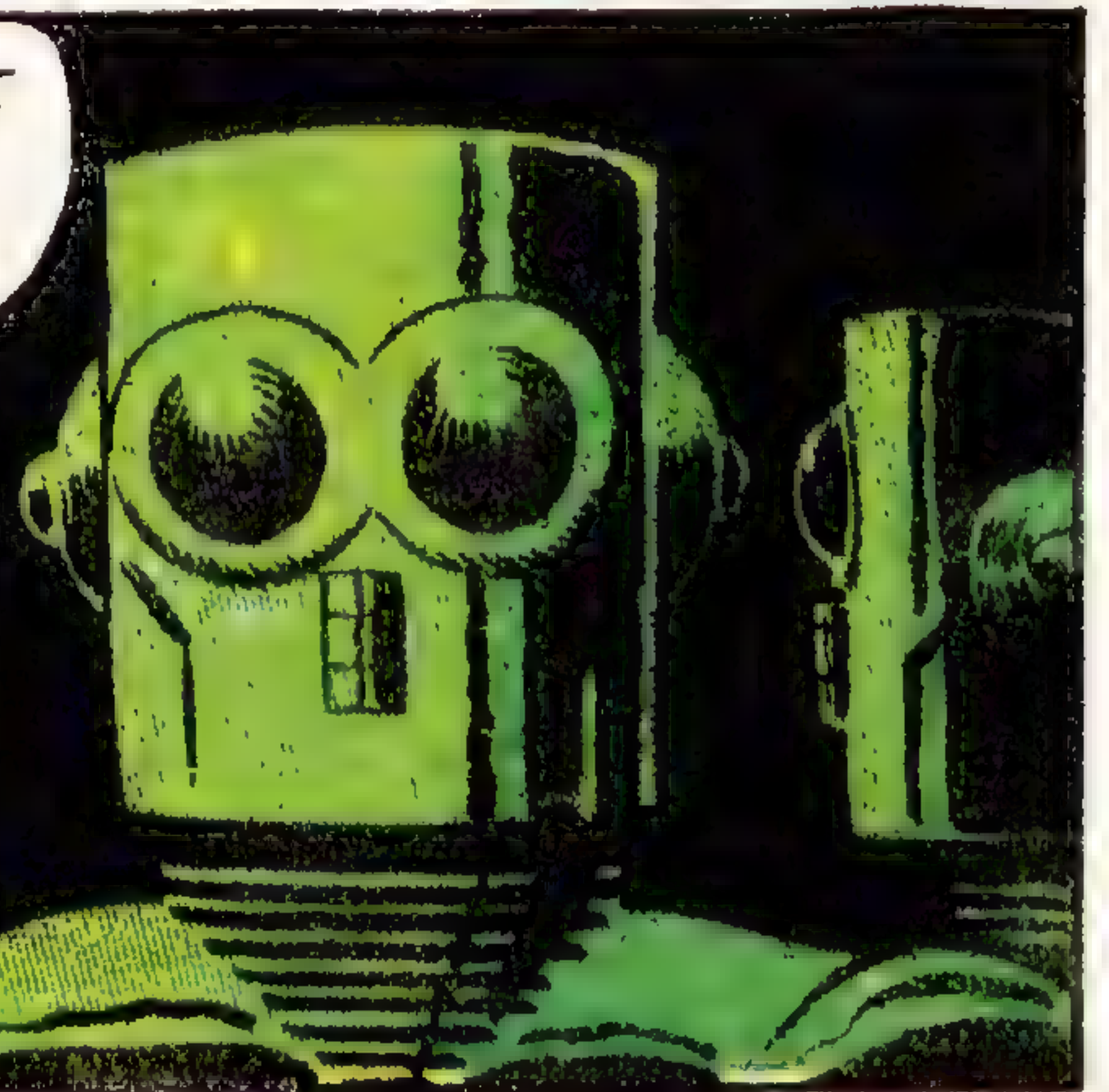
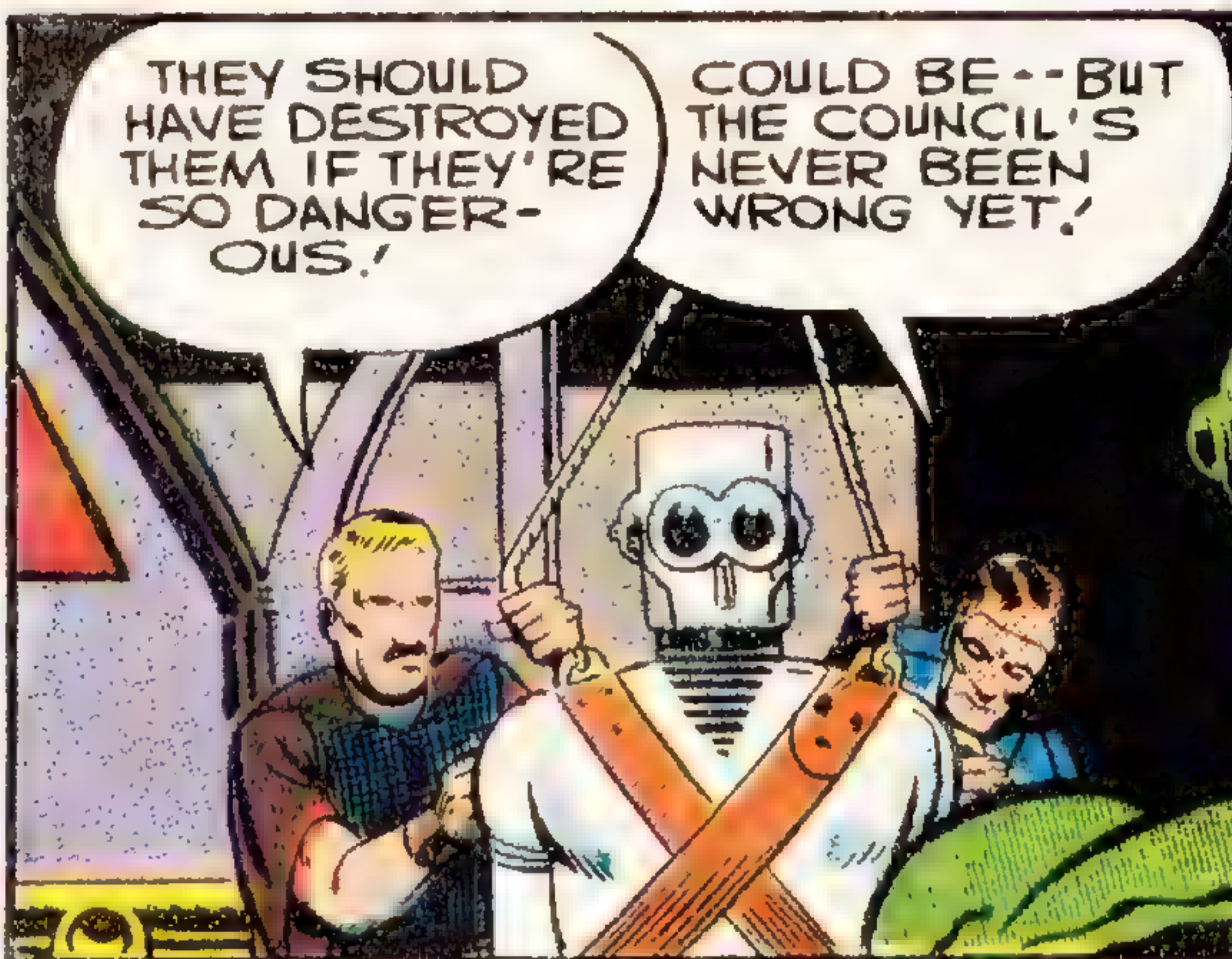
HOWEVER, RATHER THAN DESTROY THIS MOST RE-CENT PRODUCT OF MAN-KIND'S INGENUITY, WE DECREE THAT THE UNITS ALREADY IN EXISTENCE BE STORED AWAY IN SOME ISOLATED WAREHOUSE FOR STUDY BY SCIENTISTS OF THE FUTURE!



AND SO THIS WAS THEIR DECISION! AND THE THOUSAND UNITS OF XT 314, THE MOST ADVANCED ROBOT PRODUCED TO DATE, SO ADVANCED THAT IT EVEN CONTAINED EMOTION COILS, WERE PREPARED FOR STORAGE...

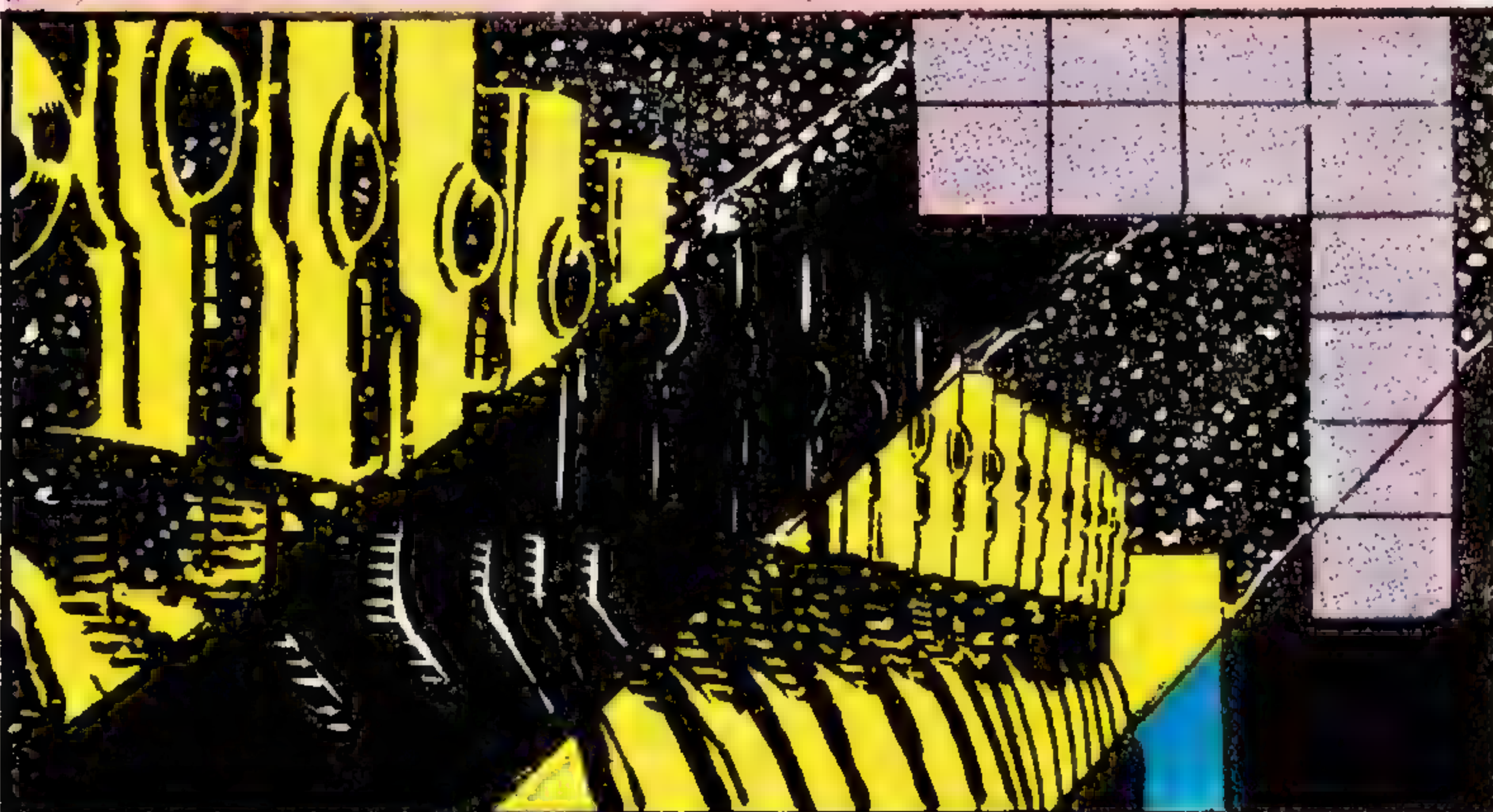
THEY SHOULD HAVE DESTROYED THEM IF THEY'RE SO DANGEROUS!

COULD BE -- BUT THE COUNCIL'S NEVER BEEN WRONG YET!

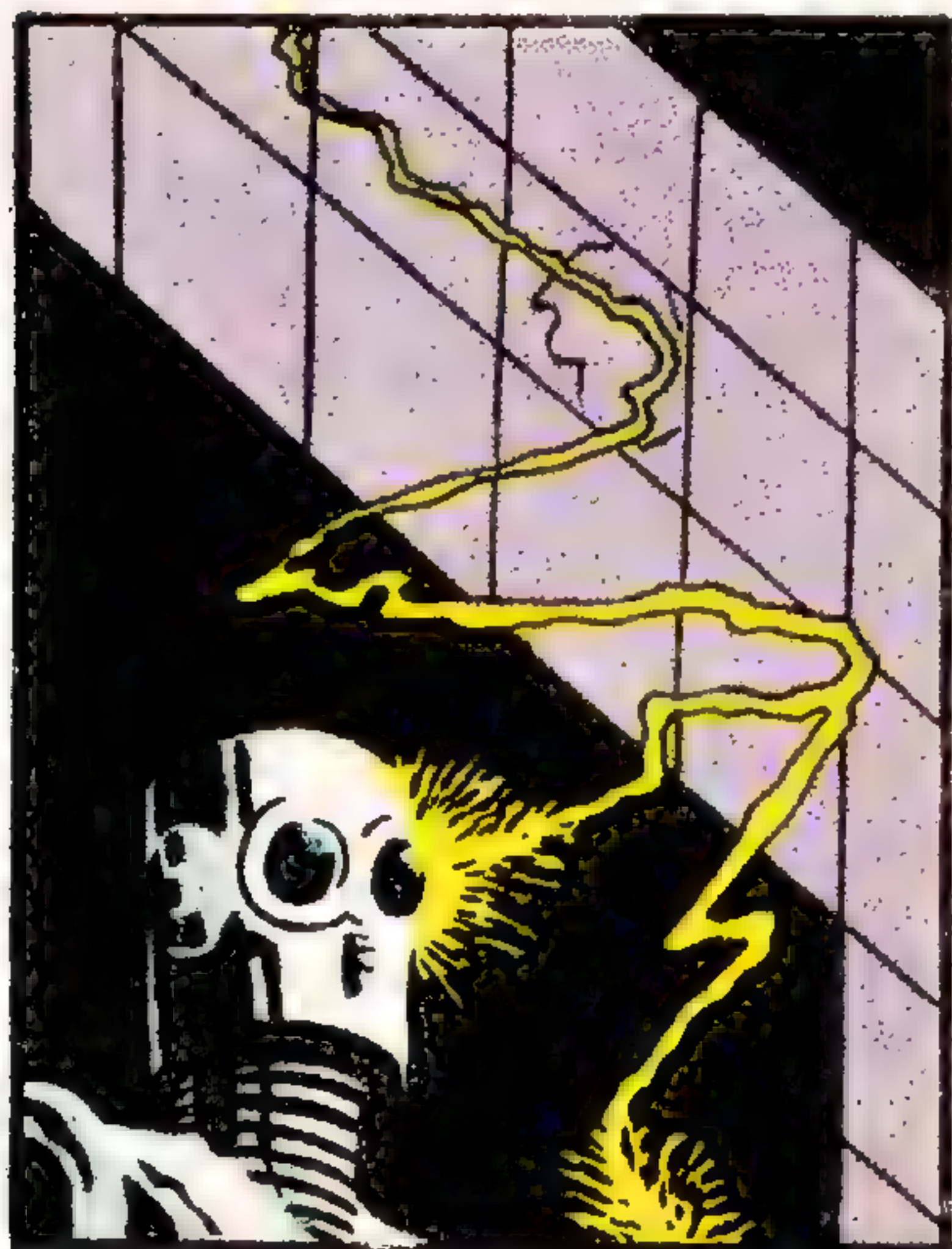


TWENTY YEARS HAD PASSED SINCE THAT FATEFUL DECISION! AND THOSE INTRICATELY WIRED UNITS OF METAL, INACTIVATED BY THEIR DYNAMOS HAVING BEEN REMOVED, WERE STILL LINED UP, THEIR METAL SHOULDERS PRESSED TIGHTLY TOGETHER, AGAINST THE WALLS OF THE DESOLATE WAREHOUSE...

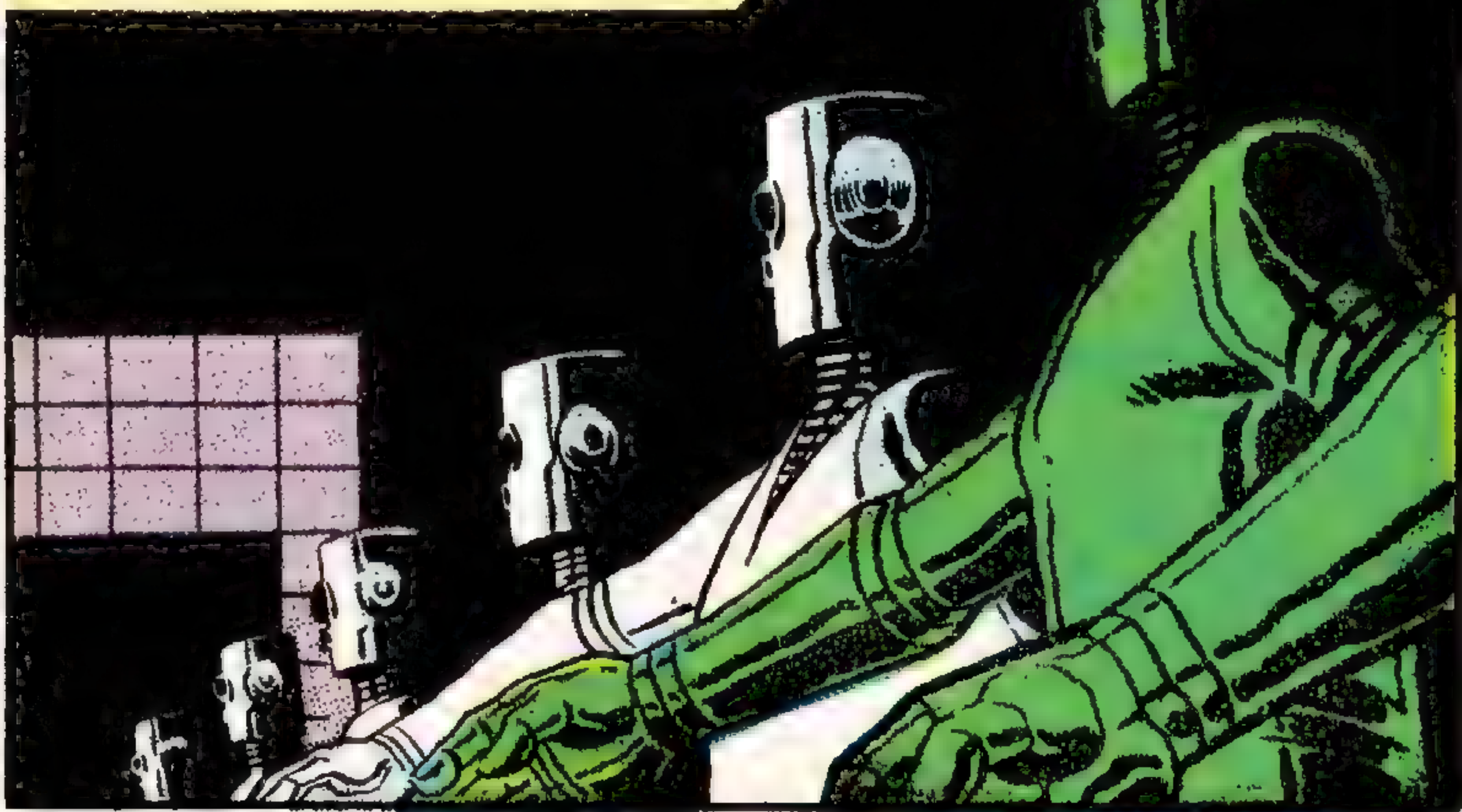
BUT THEN ONE NIGHT A FIERCE ELECTRICAL STORM AROSE! THE HIGH WINDS SHATTERED ONE OF THE WAREHOUSE WINDOWS...



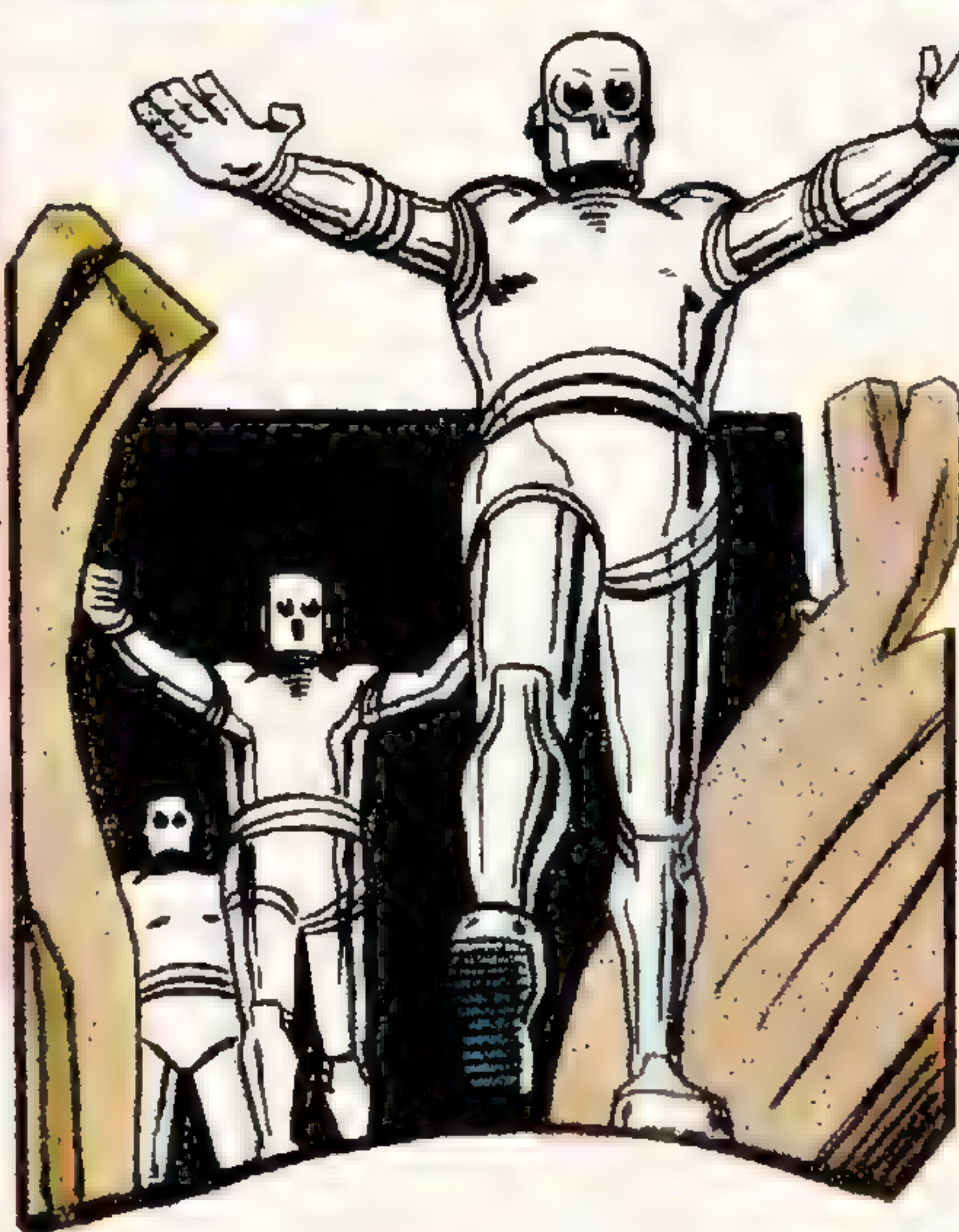
A LIGHTNING BOLT ZIG-ZAGGED INSIDE ...



... AND PROVIDED THE ELECTRICAL IMPULSE REQUIRED TO BRING THE ROBOTS TO 'LIFE'! THEY ROSE PONDEROUSLY! EN MASSE, THEY MOVED TOWARD THE DOOR...



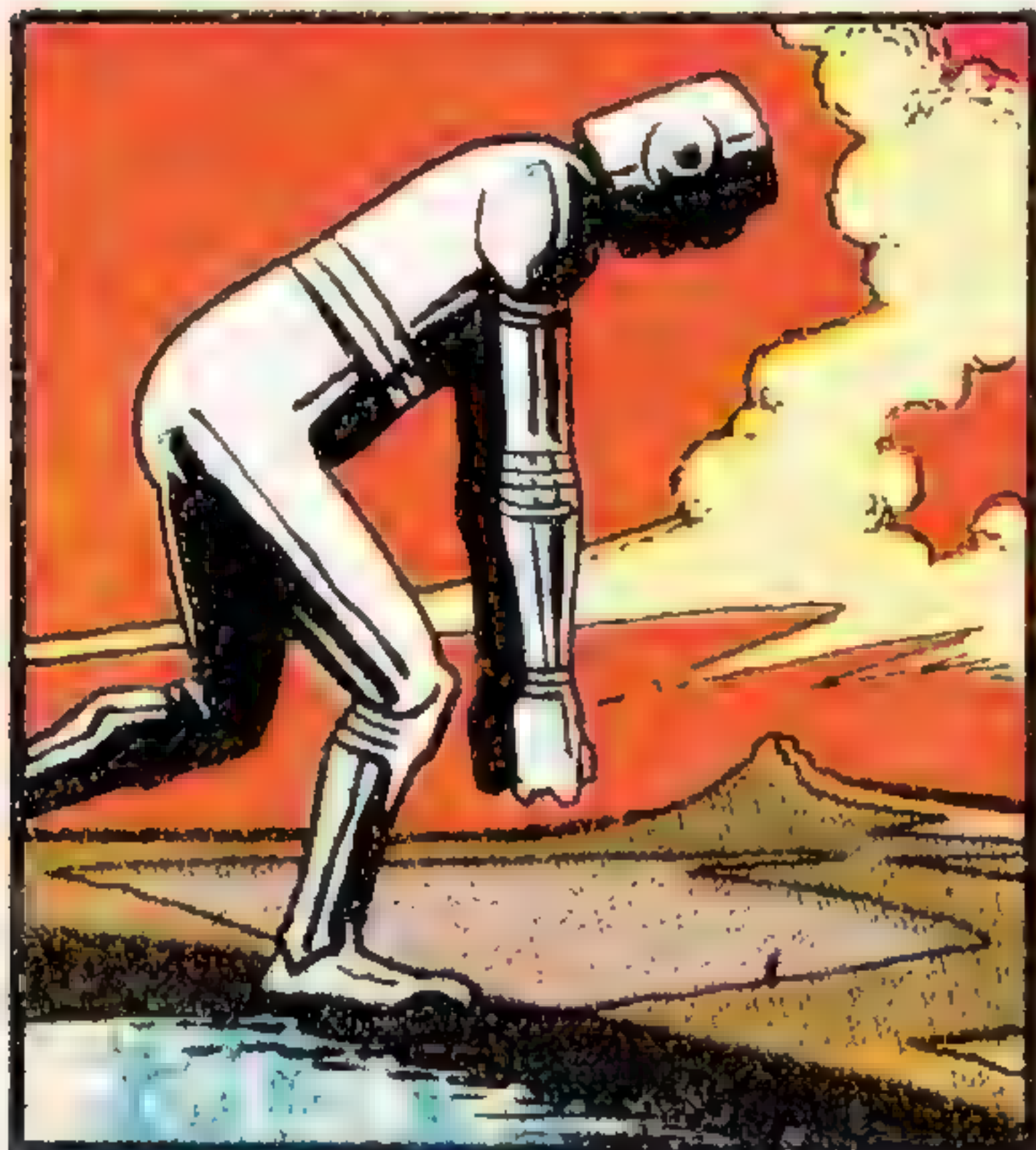
THE MASSIVE DOOR SPLINTERED OPEN! THEY MARCHED MENACINGLY FORWARD, THEIR EMOTION COILS SEETHING WITH MENACE...



... THEIR METAL EYES PROBING THE DESOLATE LANDSCAPE FOR MEN ON WHOM THEY COULD WREAK VENGEANCE FOR HAVING BEEN IMPRISONED SO LONG...



ANOTHER TWENTY YEARS HAD PASSED... AND THEY WERE STILL MARCHING... BUT AS YET THEY HAD NOT FOUND A SINGLE MAN...

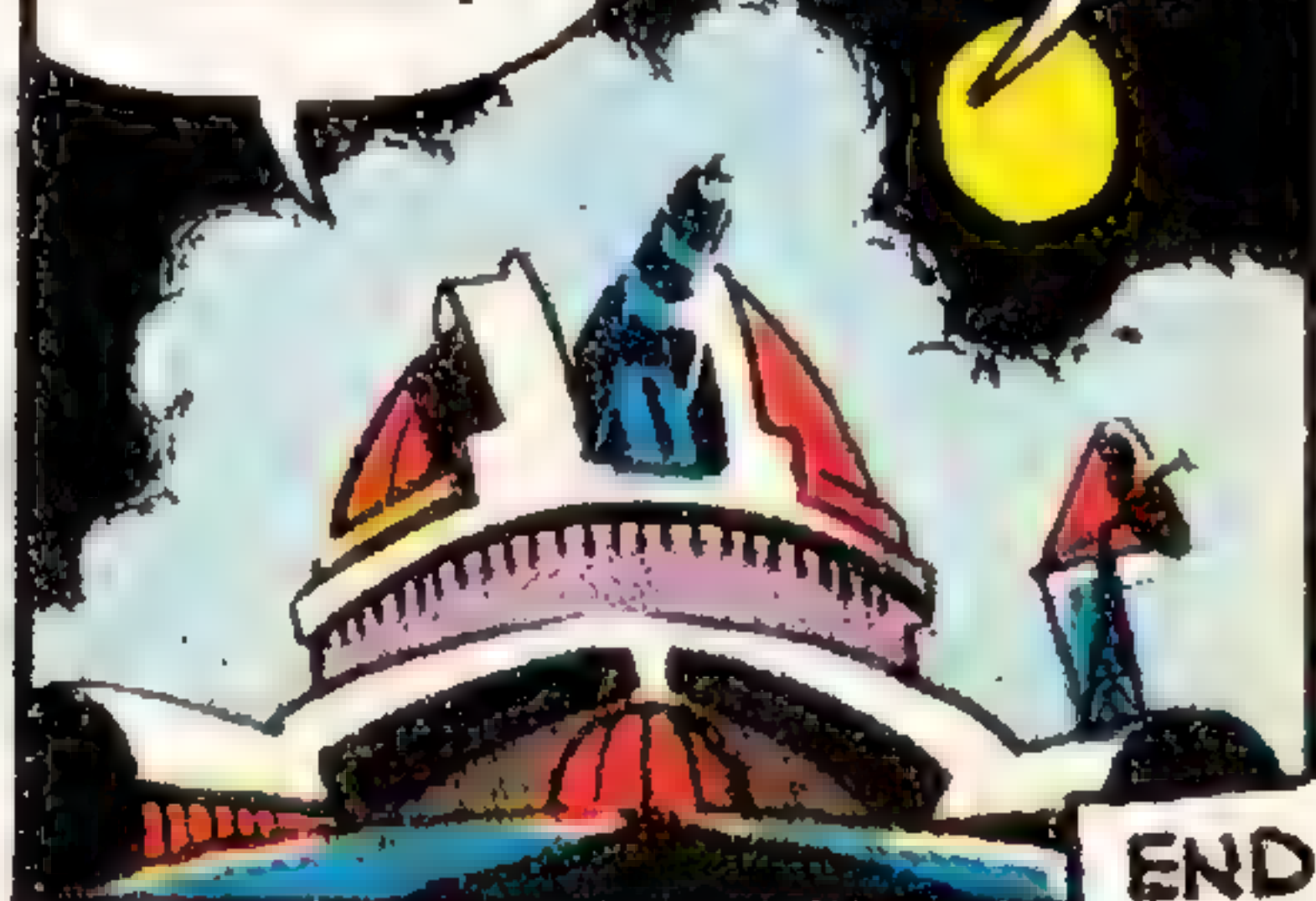


... FOR THEIR WAREHOUSE HAD BEEN THE ONLY BUILDING ON A SMALL UNINHABITED ASTEROID...



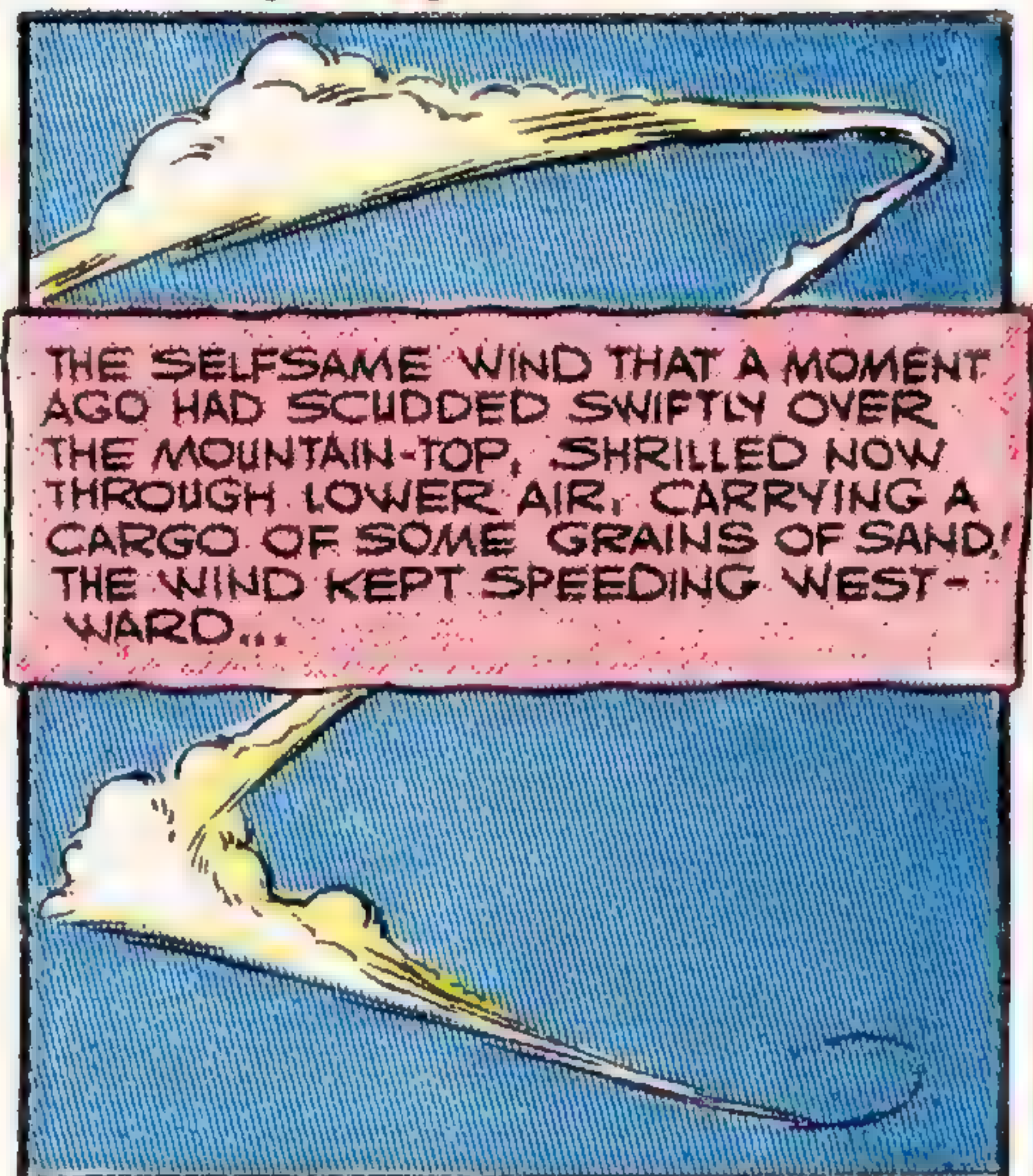
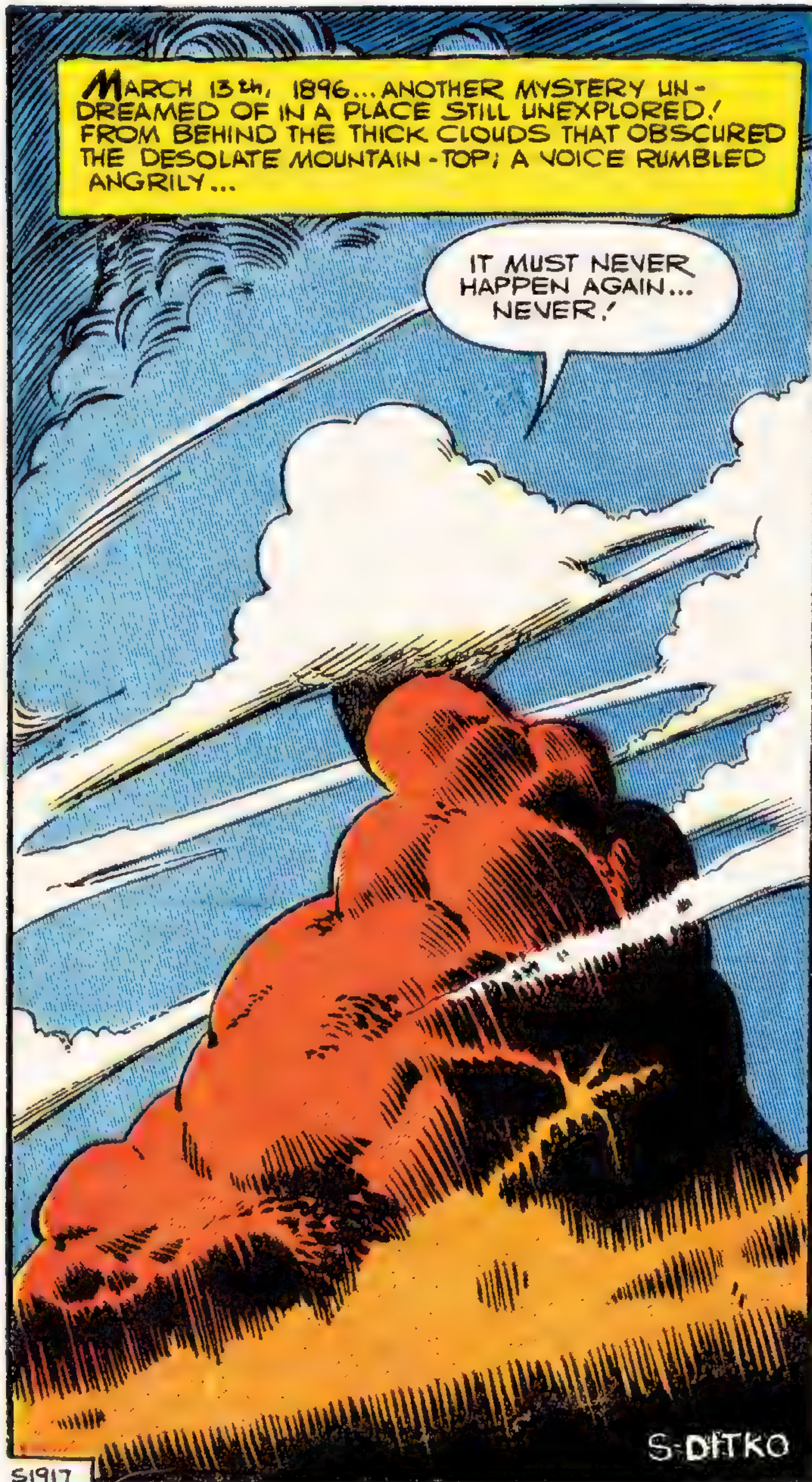
WE CAN THANK OUR LUCKY STARS THE SUPREME COUNCIL DECIDED TO PUT THE WAREHOUSE UP THERE WHERE NOBODY COULD GET HURT, NO MATTER WHAT WENT WRONG!

THEY HAVE NEVER MADE A WRONG DECISION YET! LET'S HOPE THEY NEVER WILL!



END

The FORBIDDEN ROOM



AND WESTWARD LAY THE GLOOMY PILE OF STONE, DEXTER HALL, WHICH CONTAINED THE FORBIDDEN ROOM!





OF COURSE, SIR! BUT ONLY A MADMAN WOULD GO IN THERE!



NO ONE'S STEPPED OVER THE THRESHOLD SINCE THAT TERRIBLE DAY!



...BUT THIS WAY, BY MERELY OPENING THAT DOOR, AIRING THE ROOM AND CLEANING IT, I SHALL...

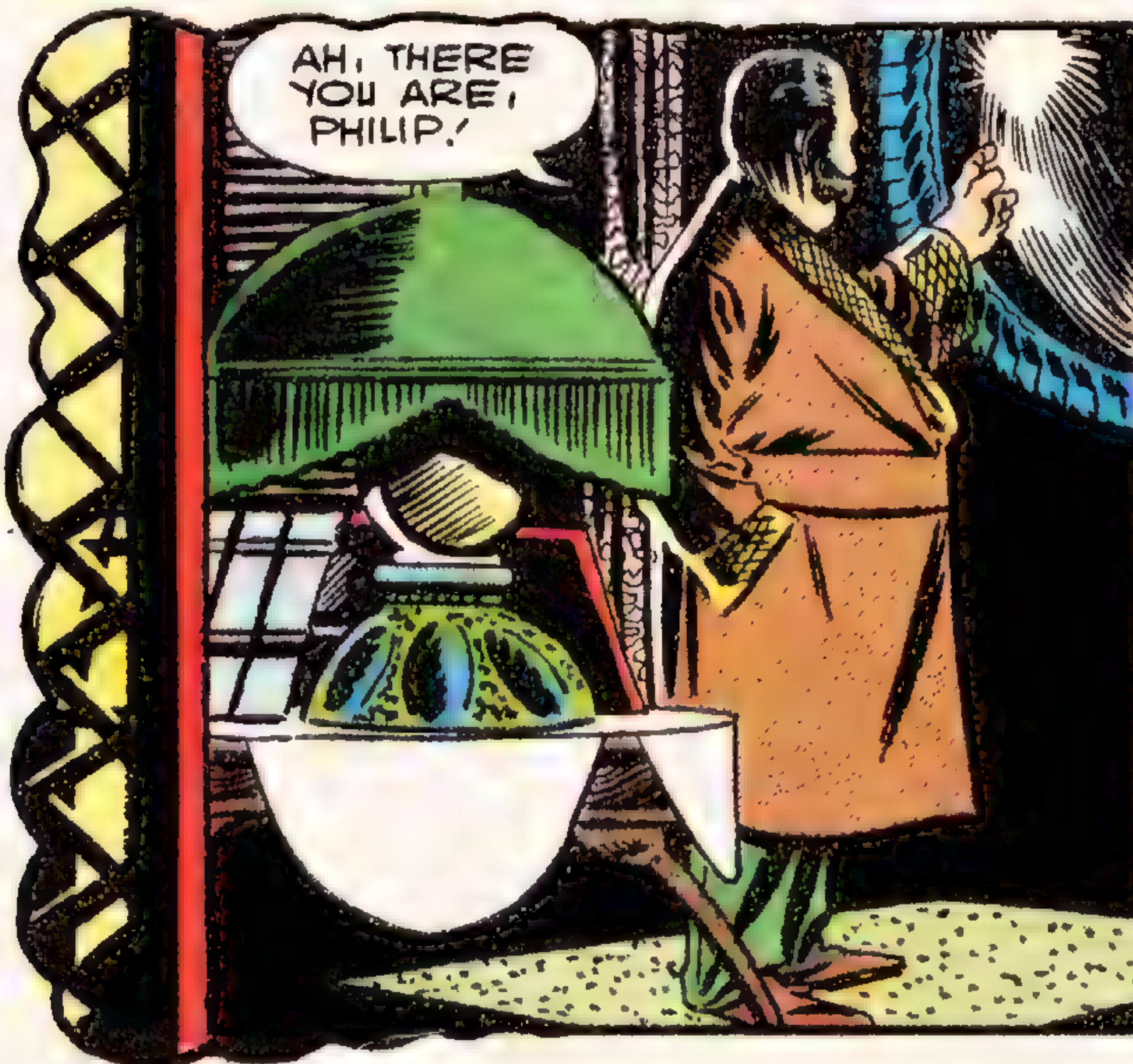


NO!
NO!

THE SERVANTS KEPT PLEADING WITH THE DAPPER YOUNG MAN! BUT PHILIP DEXTER WAS NO LONGER LISTENING TO THEM! HE WAS REMEMBERING WITH GRIM AMUSEMENT...



THE DAY MY UNCLE SUMMONED ME TO HIS STUDY...



AH, THERE YOU ARE, PHILIP!



AT YOUR SERVICE, MY DEAR UNCLE!

HIS HUMBLE WORDS HAD MASKED A SULLEN BITTERNESS! HOW HE HATED THE WEALTHY WASTREL WHO EMPLOYED HIM AS PERSONAL AIDE AND PAID HIM WITH CAST-OFF CLOTHES AND A NARROW ROOM IN THE SERVANT'S QUARTERS...

TELL ME THE TRUTH, PHILIP! HAVE I BEGUN TO AGE?



FEAR OF OLD AGE HAD BEEN THE ONE CHINK IN THE ARMOR OF THAT CRUEL AND SELFISH MAN! FEAR OF DECREPITUDE... AND THE END OF HIS ROUND OF PLEASURES...

NOT OLD, UNCLE! A FEW WRINKLES, PERHAPS! A GREY HAIR OR TWO!



AFTER ALL, UNCLE, YOU HAVE ALWAYS LIVED TO THE HILT! AND TIME MUST TAKE ITS TOLL!

NO! NO!

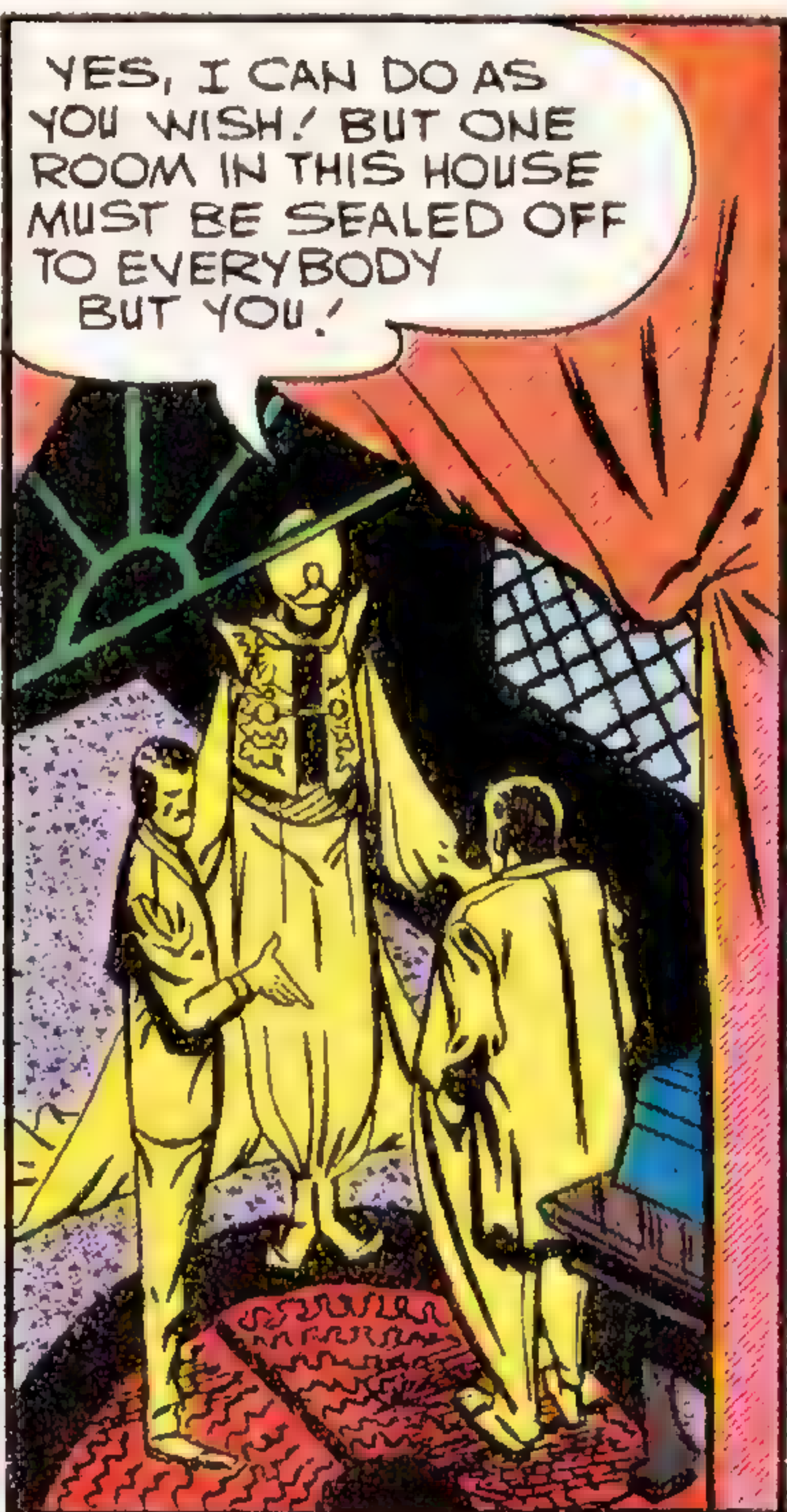


I SAY NO! WITH ALL MY MONEY, WHY SHOULD I BE SUBJECT TO TIME? THERE MUST BE SPECIAL DOCTORS! I DON'T CARE HOW MUCH THEY CHARGE! PHILIP-- FIND ME SOMEONE WHO CAN WARD OFF OLD AGE... AND YOU SHALL KNOW MY GRATITUDE!

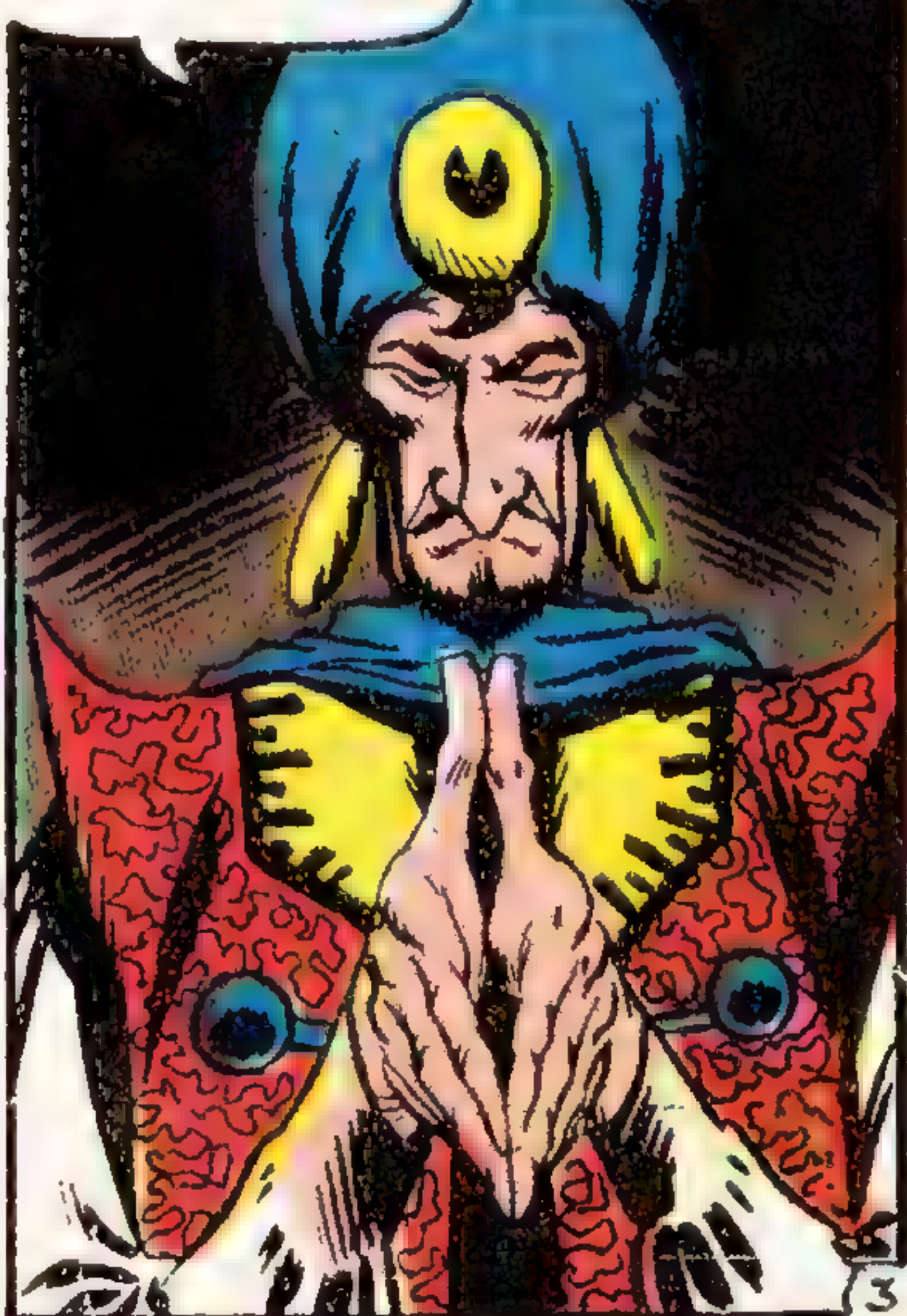


A WEEK LATER, PHILIP HAD BROUGHT THE SWAMI TO SEE HIS UNCLE...

YES, I CAN DO AS YOU WISH! BUT ONE ROOM IN THIS HOUSE MUST BE SEALED OFF TO EVERYBODY BUT YOU!

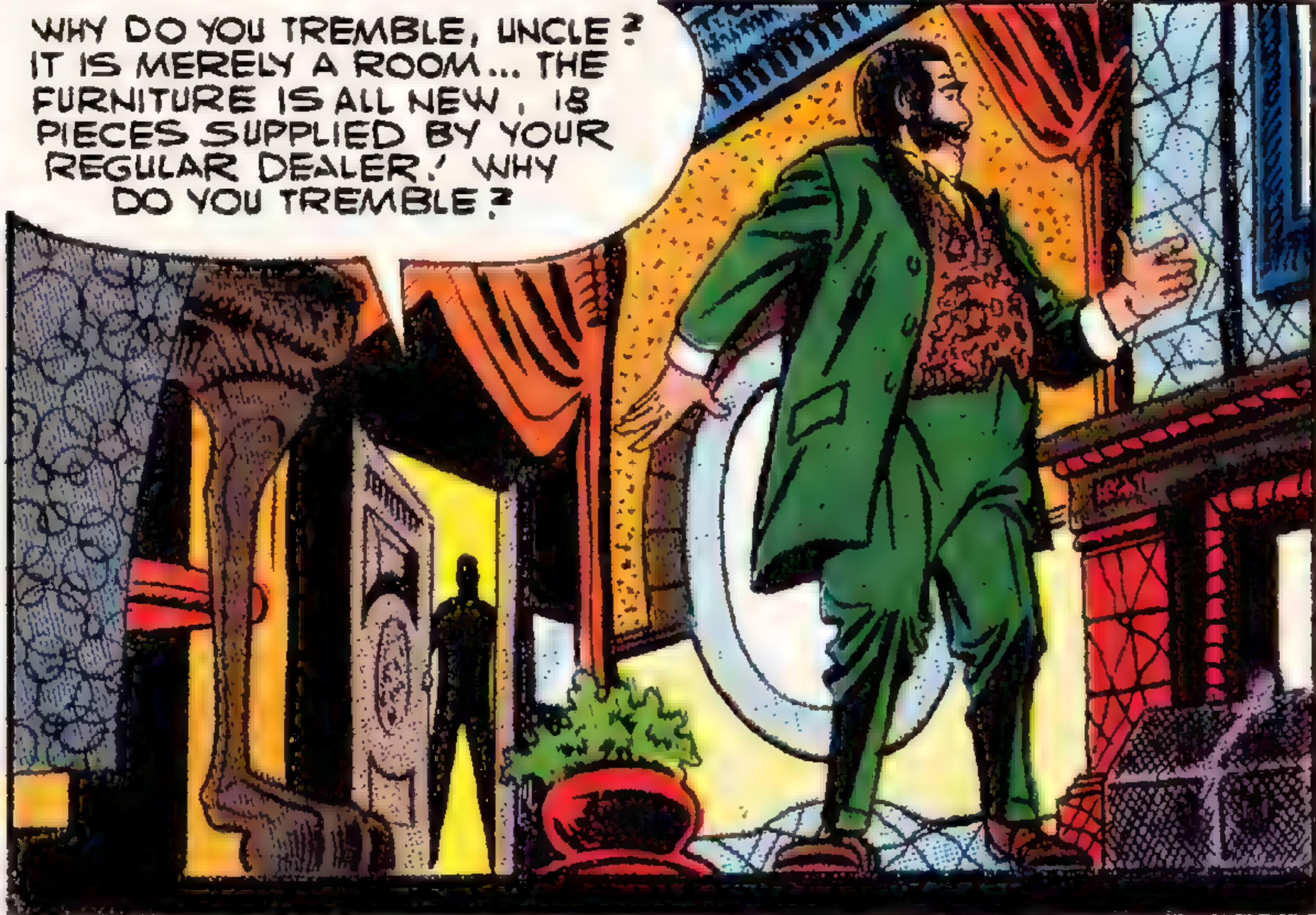


WITH YOUR NEPHEW'S HELP, I SHALL PREPARE THIS ROOM! AND THEN YOU SHALL ENTER THIS ROOM ONCE A MONTH... ON THE THIRD DAY OF THE MONTH... AND IN THE MIRROR INSIDE THE ROOM, YOU SHALL SEE WHAT YOU SHALL SEE!

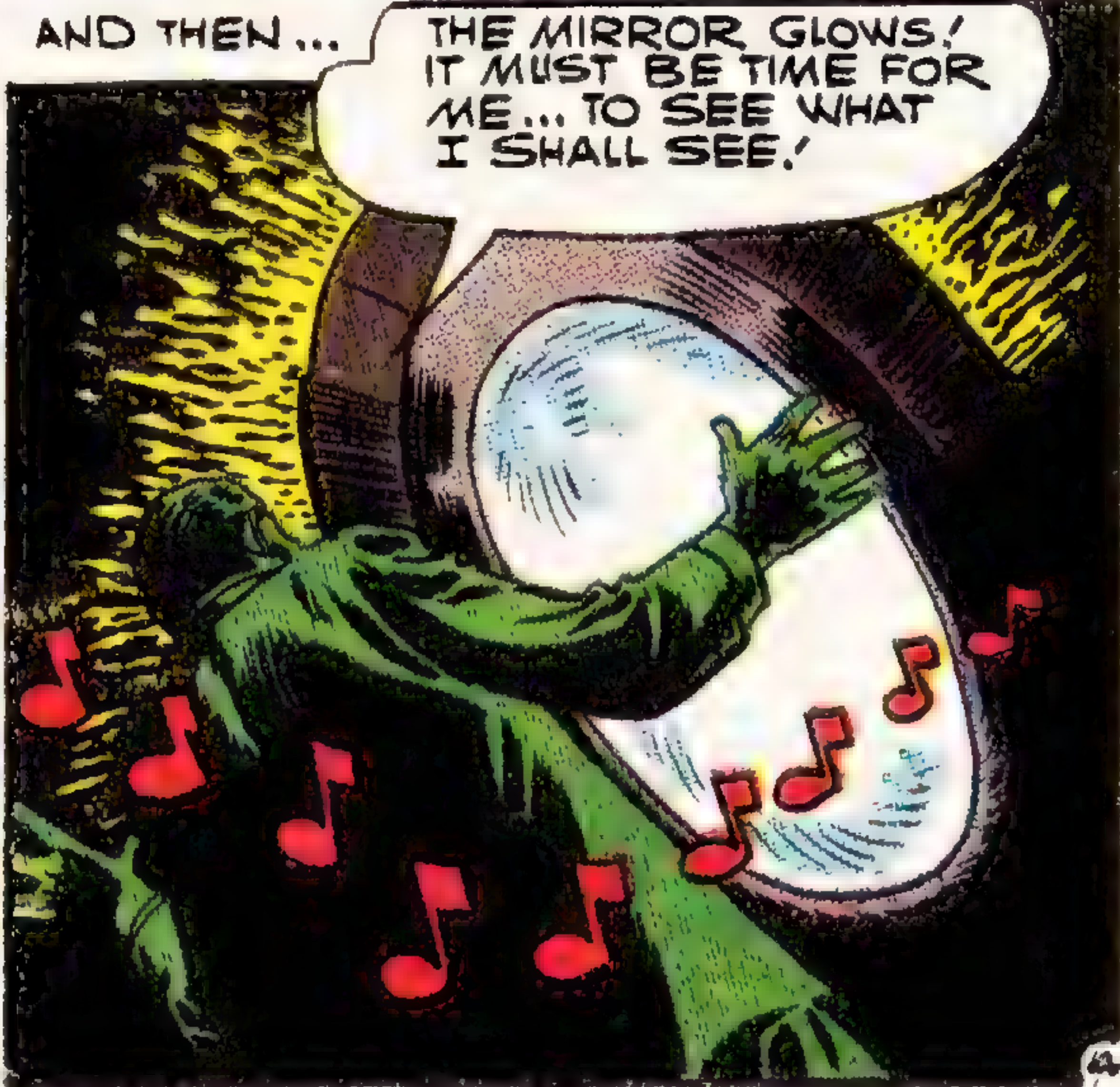


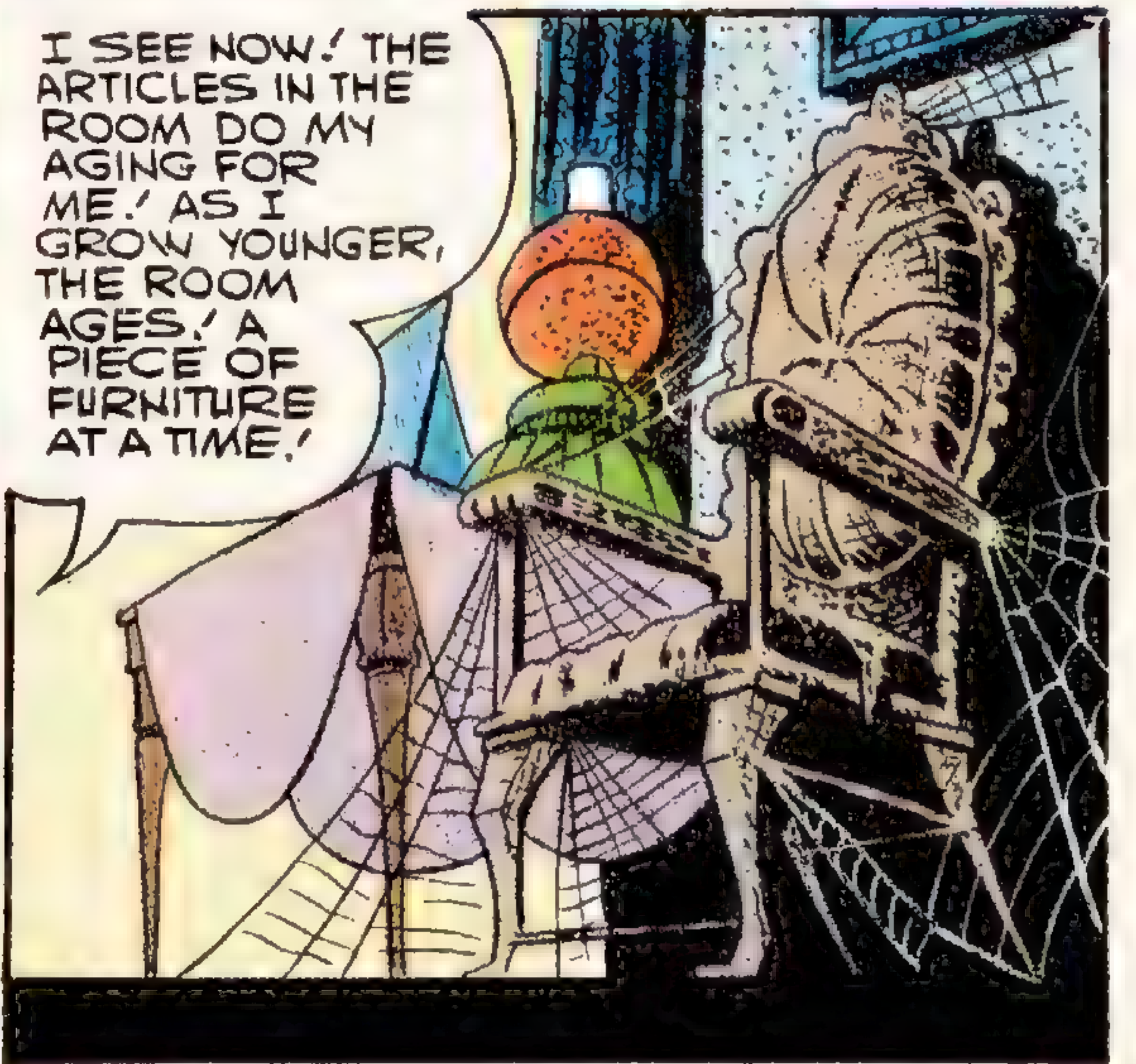


NOW THE SWAMI HAD PRO-
NOUNCED THE ROOM READY...
AND THE SWAMI HAD TAKEN
HIS LEAVE ...



BUT THEN THE DOOR HAD SLAMMED BEHIND HIM, AND THE LIGHTS INSIDE THE ROOM HAD DIMMED WITH FRIGHTENING SUDDENNESS! AND THEN, FROM THE SHADOWS...

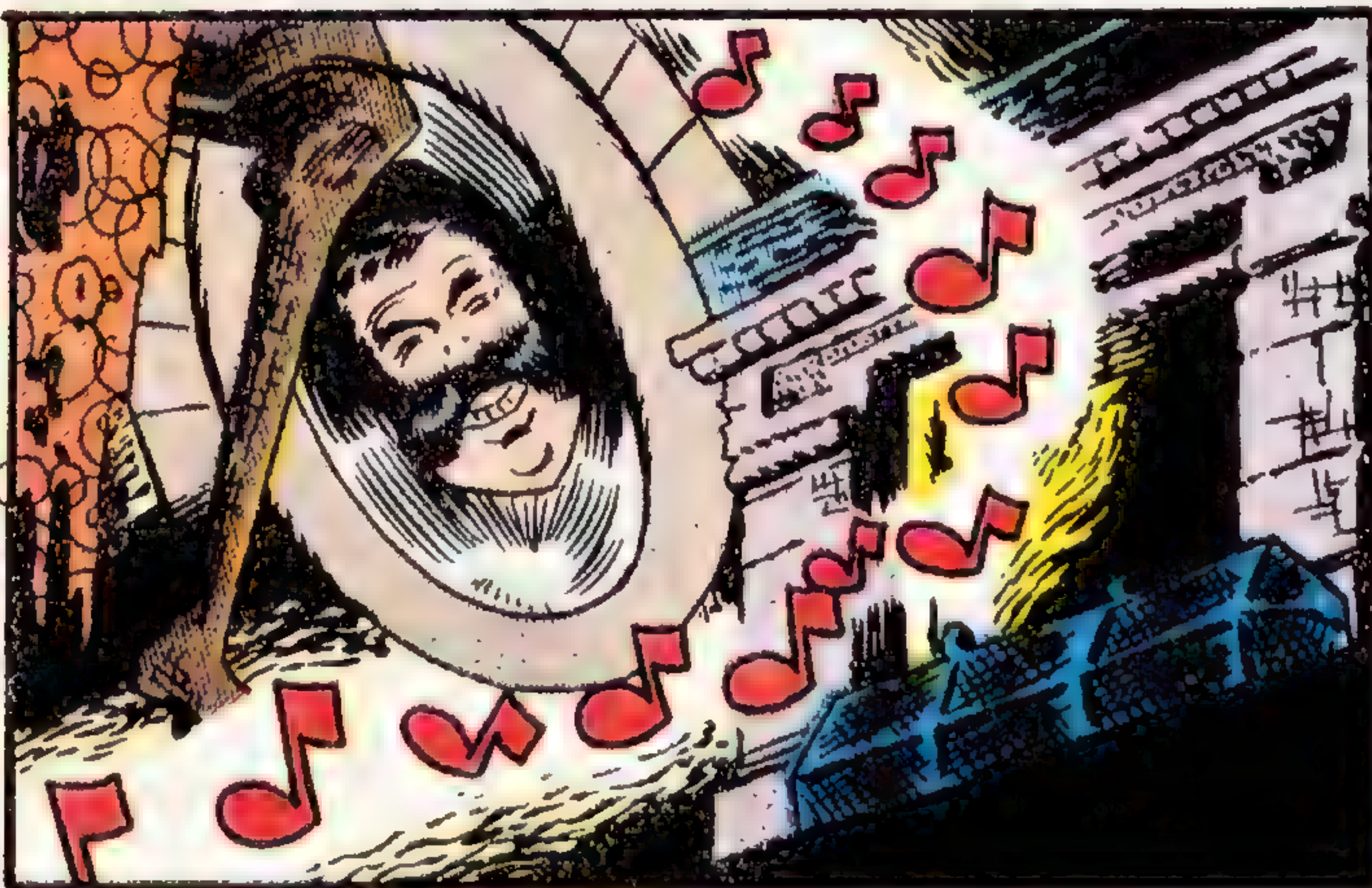




BUT HIS UNCLE HAD BEEN TOO ELATED TO DO MORE THAN SHUDDER MOMENTARILY, AND THEN BRUSH OFF THE CHILLING THOUGHT! AND NOW...

A YEAR AND A HALF PASSED WITH HIS UNCLE LIVING EVER MORE STRENUOUSLY, DEPENDING UPON THE ROOM TO WARD OFF WHAT WOULD BE THE NORMAL CONSEQUENCES OF SO MUCH CAROUSING TO A MAN SO ADVANCED IN AGE...

MY DEAR UNCLE FEELS YOUNG AGAIN! HE PURSUES HIS ROUND OF PLEASURES WITH GREAT VIGOR!

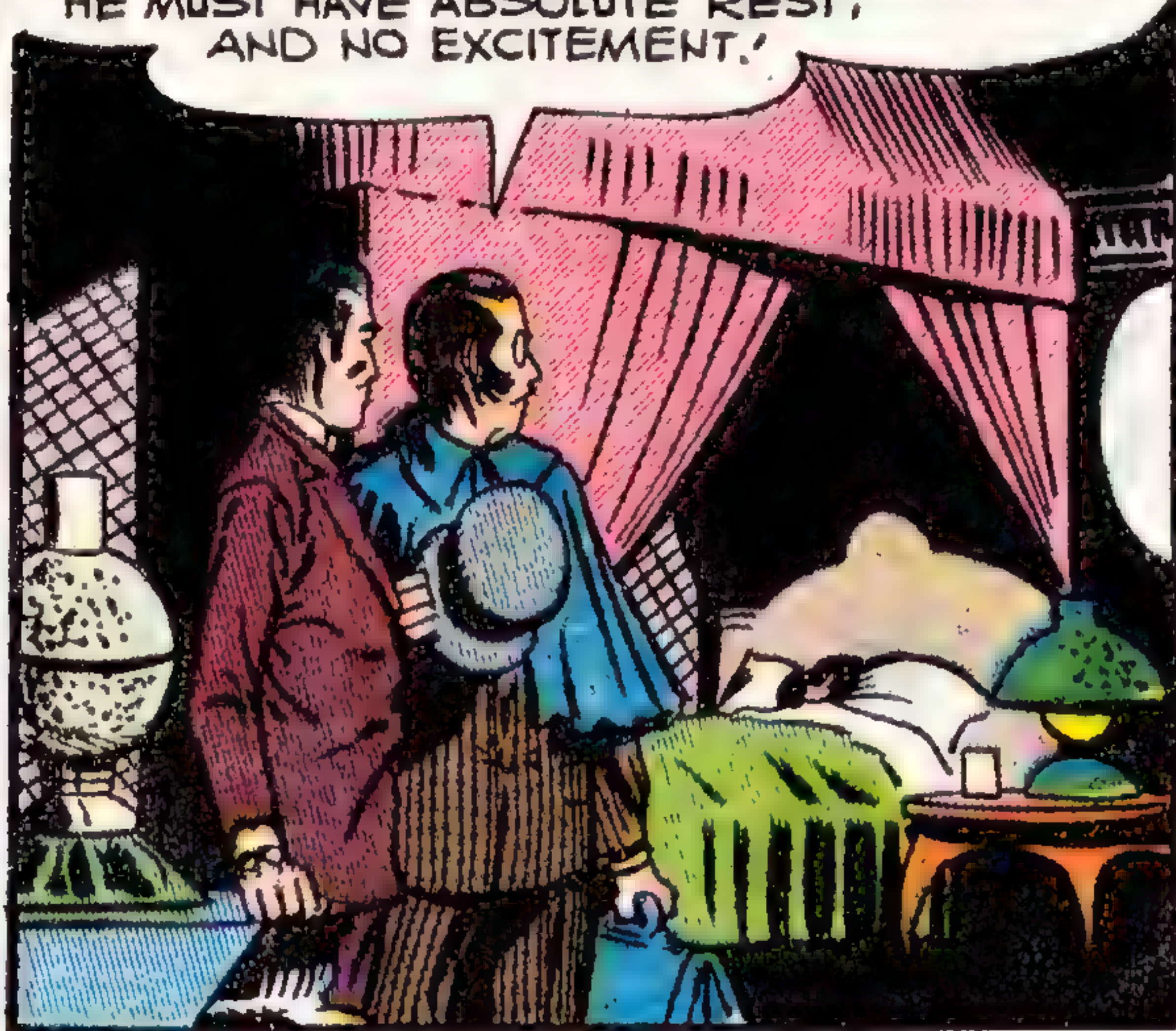


AND THEN, ONE DAY...

PH-PHILIP! C-CAN'T BREATHE...CALL MY DOCTOR...



HIS HEART HAS BEEN SEVERELY STRAINED-- HE MUST HAVE ABSOLUTE REST, AND NO EXCITEMENT!



BUT THAT VERY NIGHT...

I MUST GO TO MY ROOM, PHILIP! THIS IS THE THIRD DAY OF THE MONTH! LET ME GO!

BUT 19 MONTHS HAVE PASSED SINCE YOU FIRST BEGAN USING THE ROOM, UNCLE! THERE ARE ONLY 18 PIECES OF FURNITURE IN THERE!



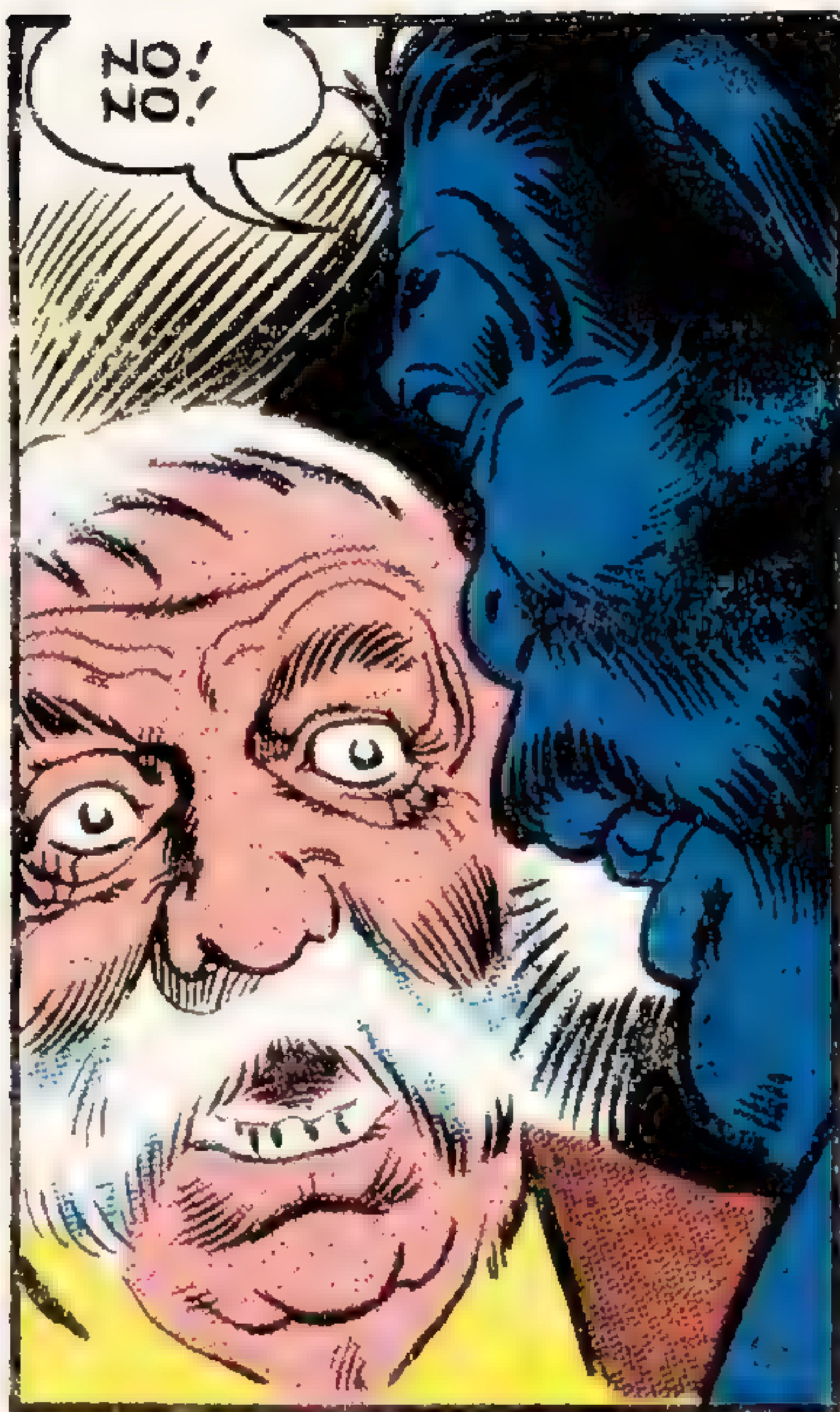
D-DON'T TRY TO FRIGHTEN ME, PHILIP! THAT'S WHAT Y-YOU'RE ALWAYS DOING... TRYING TO FRIGHTEN ME!



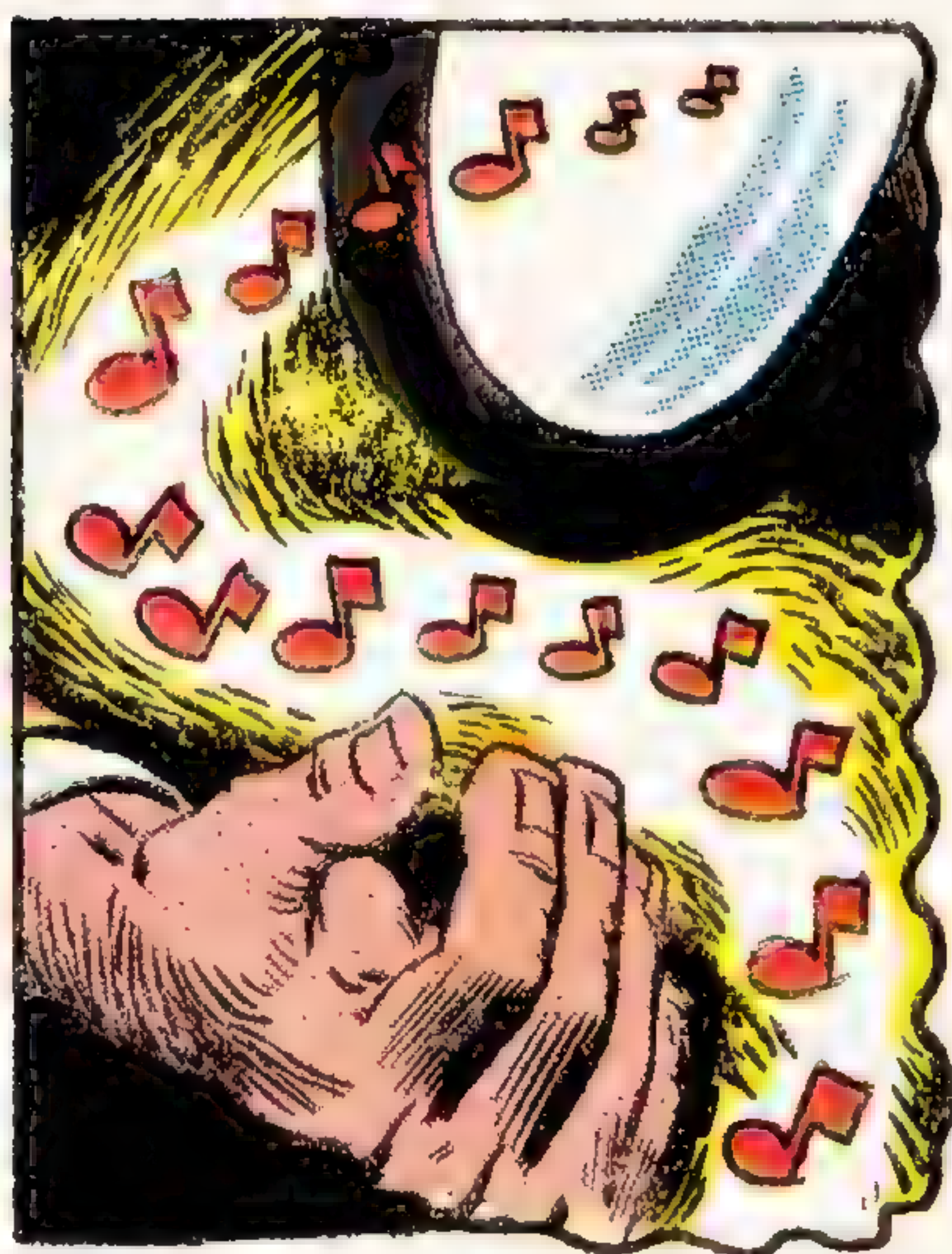
I MUST GO INSIDE!



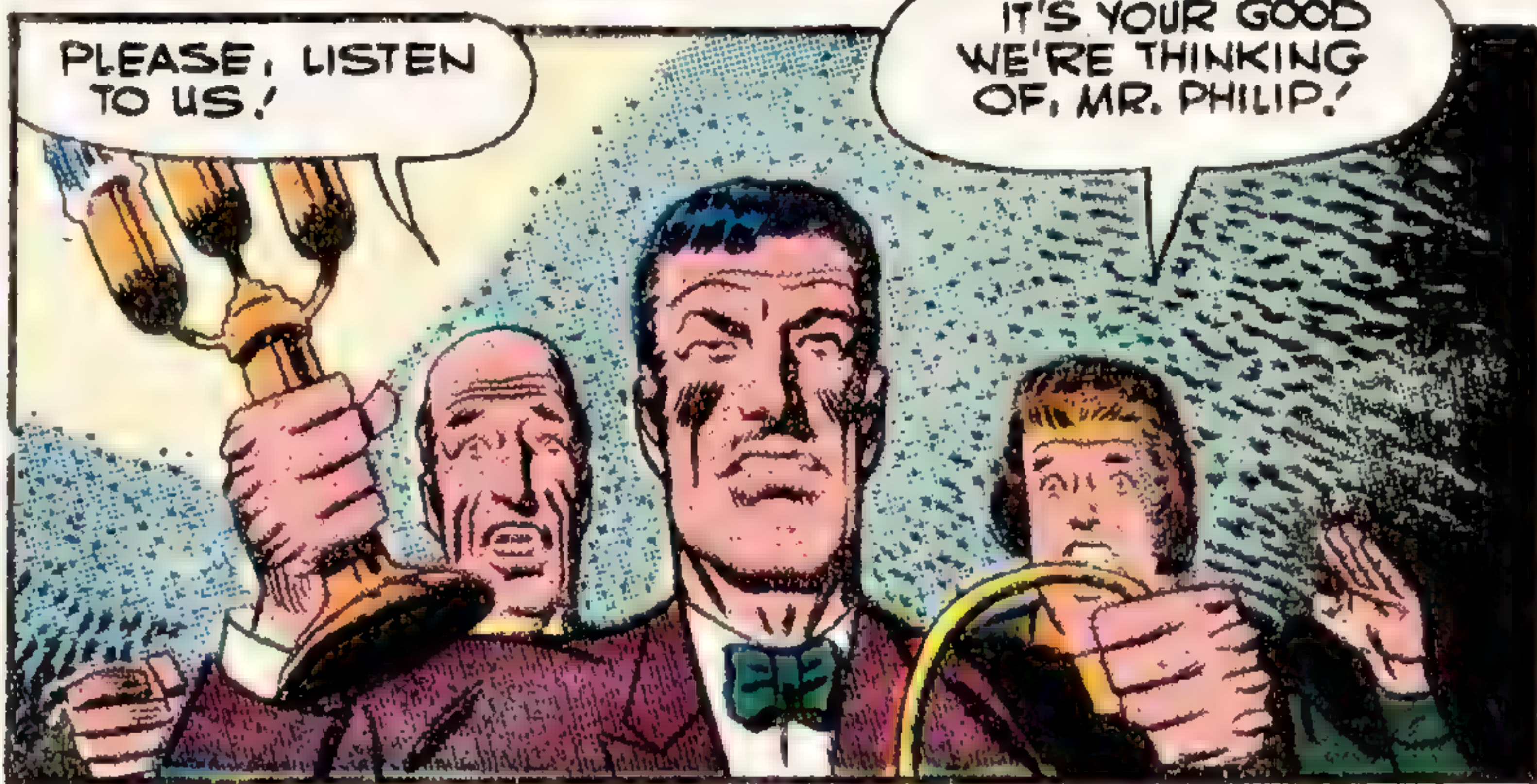
INSIDE THE ROOM, THE LIGHTS HAD DIMMED AS ALWAYS... THE EERIE MUSIC HAD PLAYED, AND THE MIRROR HAD GLOWED...



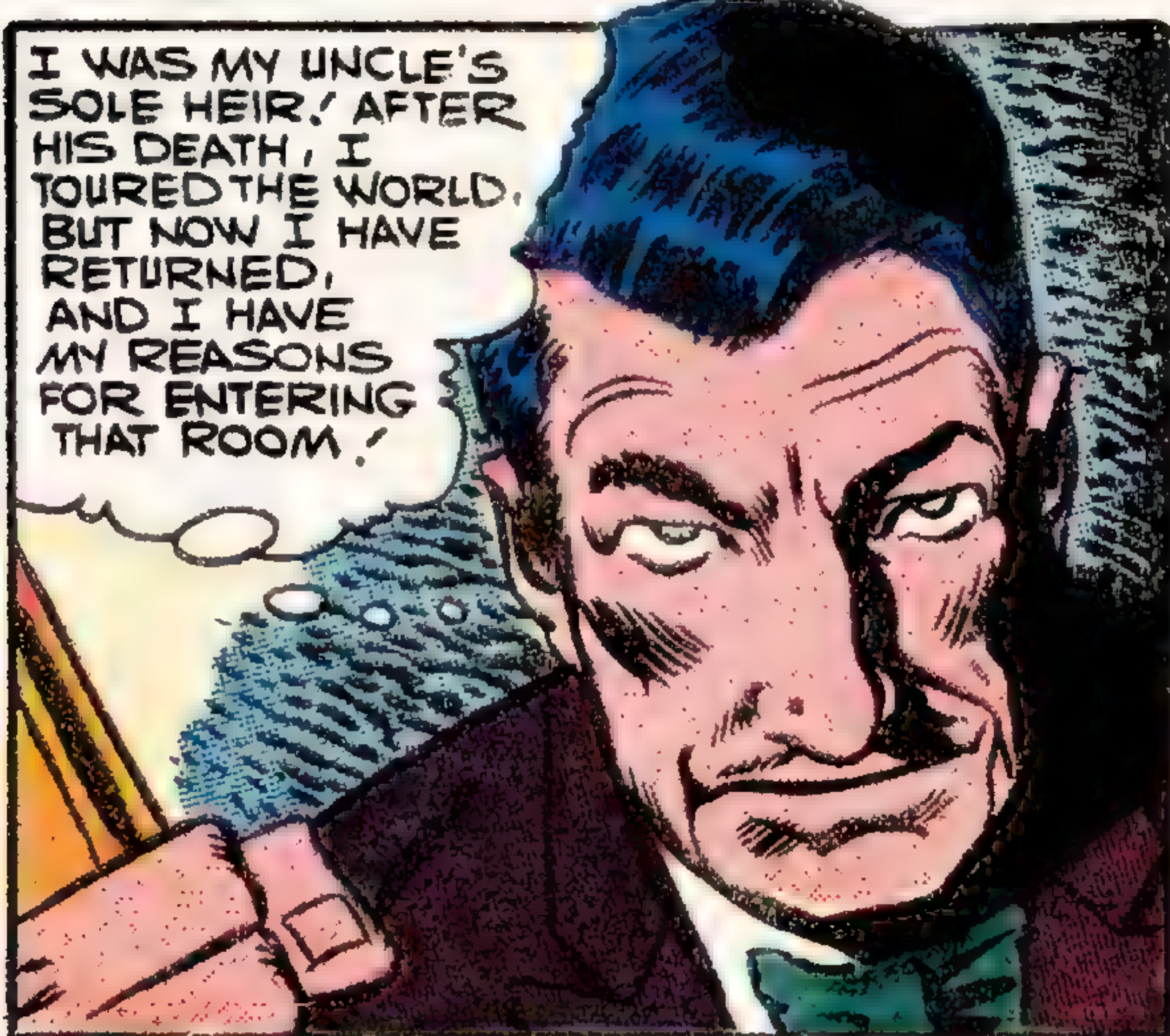
THE SHOCK, PROVIDED BY THAT FACE, WITHERED INTO HIDEOUSNESS BY AGE, HAD BEEN TOO MUCH FOR HIS UNCLE'S HEART...



ALL THAT, PHILIP DEXTER WAS REMEMBERING AS HE STOOD OUTSIDE THE ROOM NOW, WITH THE SERVANTS STILL PLEADING WITH HIM NOT TO ENTER...



BUT PHILIP DEXTER WAS REMEMBERING FURTHER...



AT THAT MOMENT, THE SELFSAME WIND THAT SCUDDLED SWIFTLY OVER THE MOUNTAIN-TOP, WAS KEEPING NOW OVER THE ROOF OF DEXTER HALL, ITS CARGO OF TINY SAND GRAINS STILL INTACT...



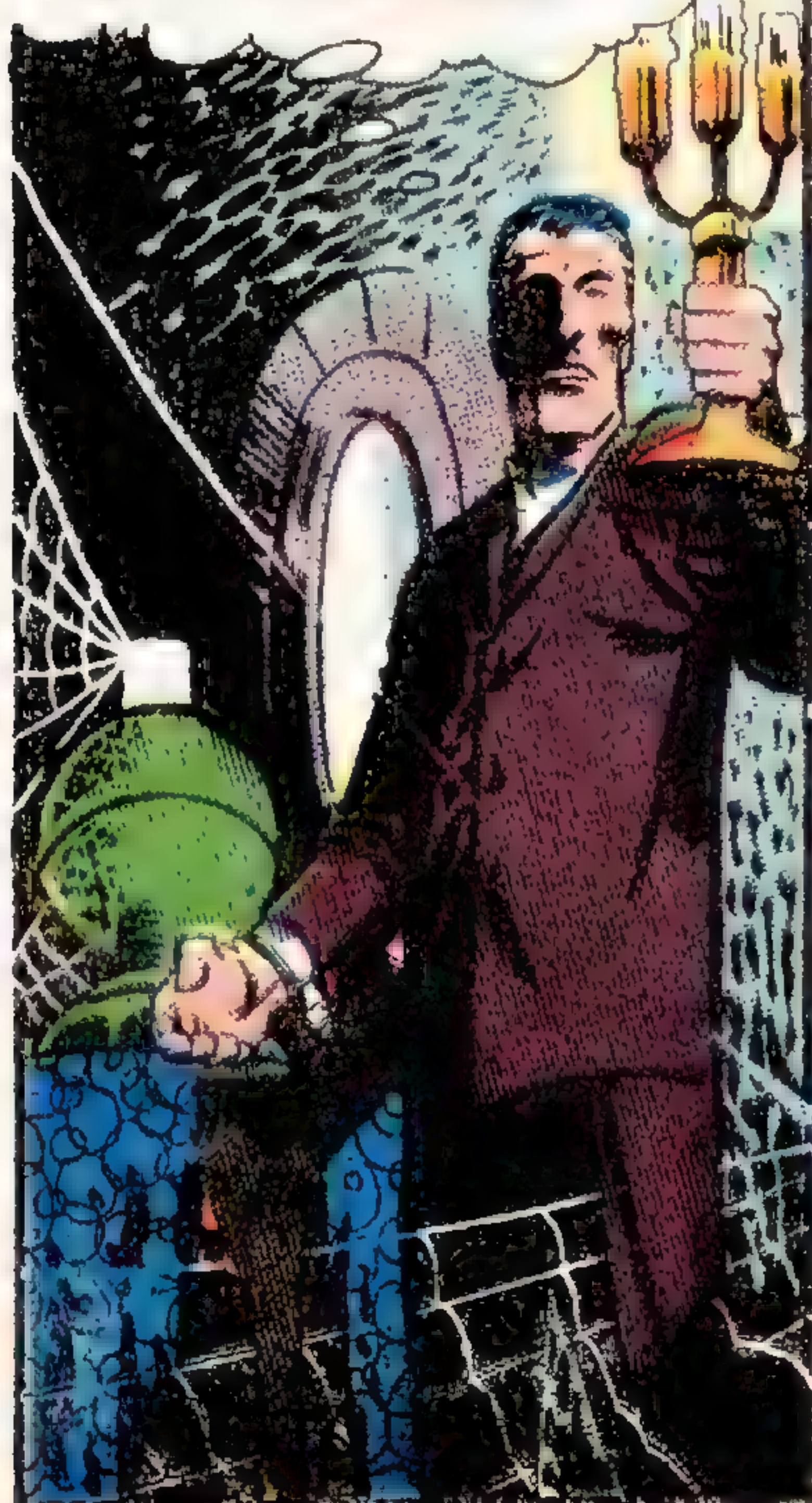
...BECAUSE THE WHOLE TRUMPERY WAS OF MY DOING! THE SWAMI WAS AN ACTOR HIRED BY ME! I KEPT CHANGING THE FURNITURE... I ARRANGED ALL THE EERIE EFFECTS... IT WAS I, WEARING DIFFERENT MASKS, WHO APPEARED IN WHAT MY UNCLE THOUGHT WAS A MIRROR!



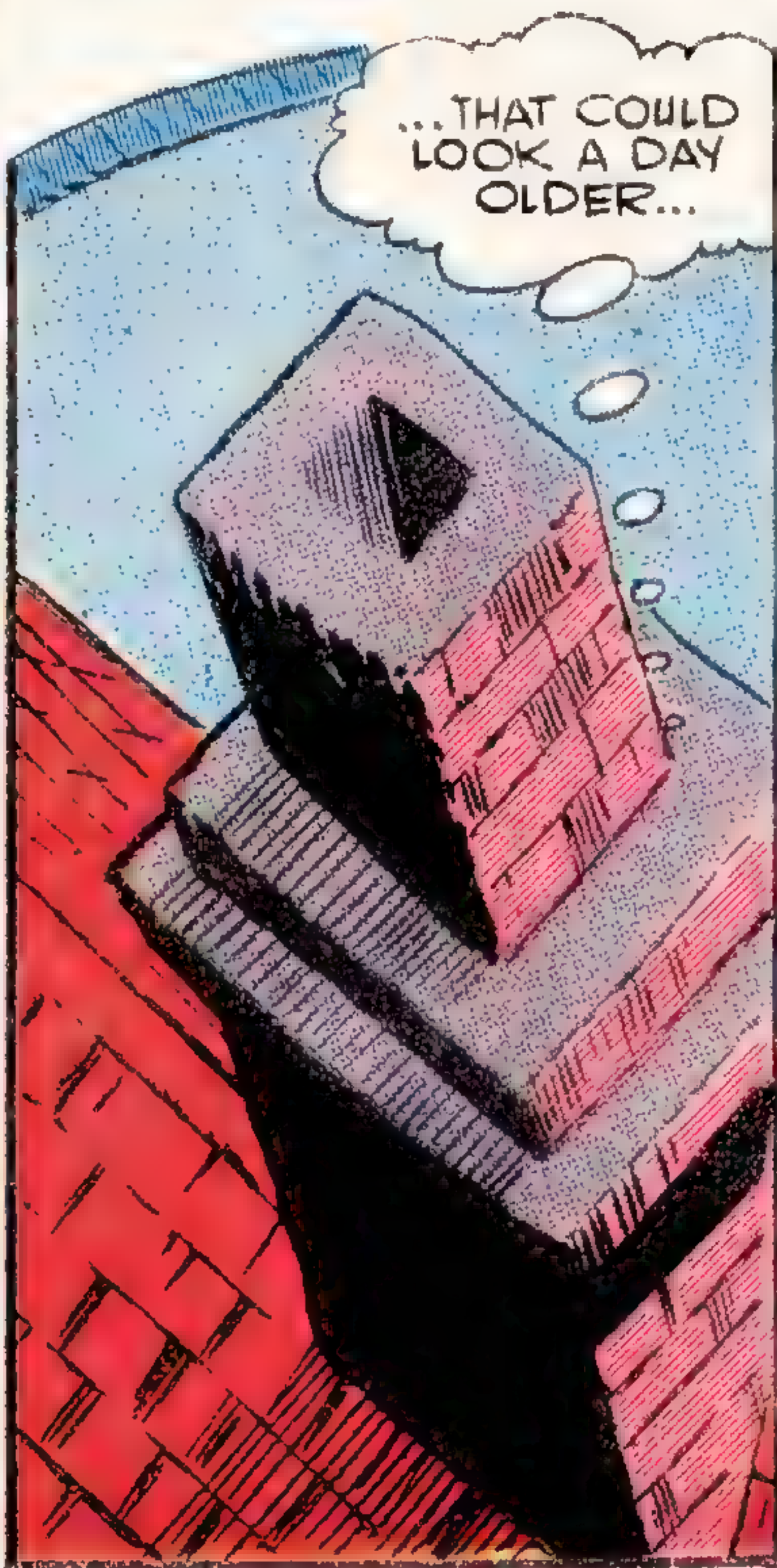
MY SCHEME WORKED PERFECTLY! IT HASTENED MY UNCLE'S DEATH JUST AS I HAD PLANNED! AND NOW I MUST GO INSIDE TO DESTROY EVERY LAST SHRED OF EVIDENCE THAT IF LEFT UNTOUCHED MIGHT SOME DAY TELL THE TALE OF WHAT REALLY HAPPENED!



HMPF... I CHOSE FINE ANTIQUES TO FOOL MY UNCLE WITH! THERE'S NOT A PIECE HERE...

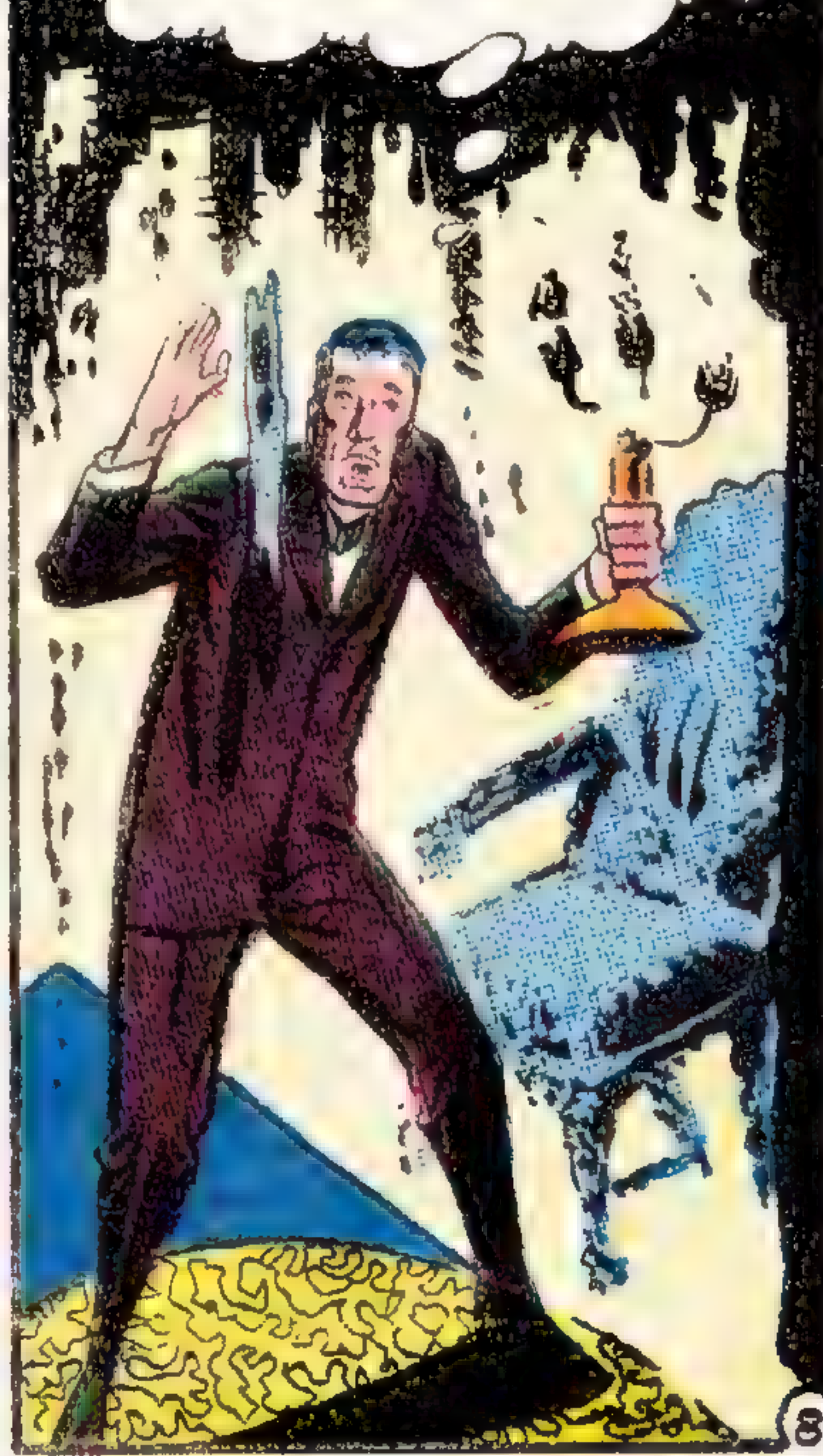


...THAT COULD LOOK A DAY OLDER...



A SLIT-SECOND LATER...

WH-WHAT IS THIS? THE FURNITURE CRUMBLING... THE DRAPES FALLING INTO DUST?





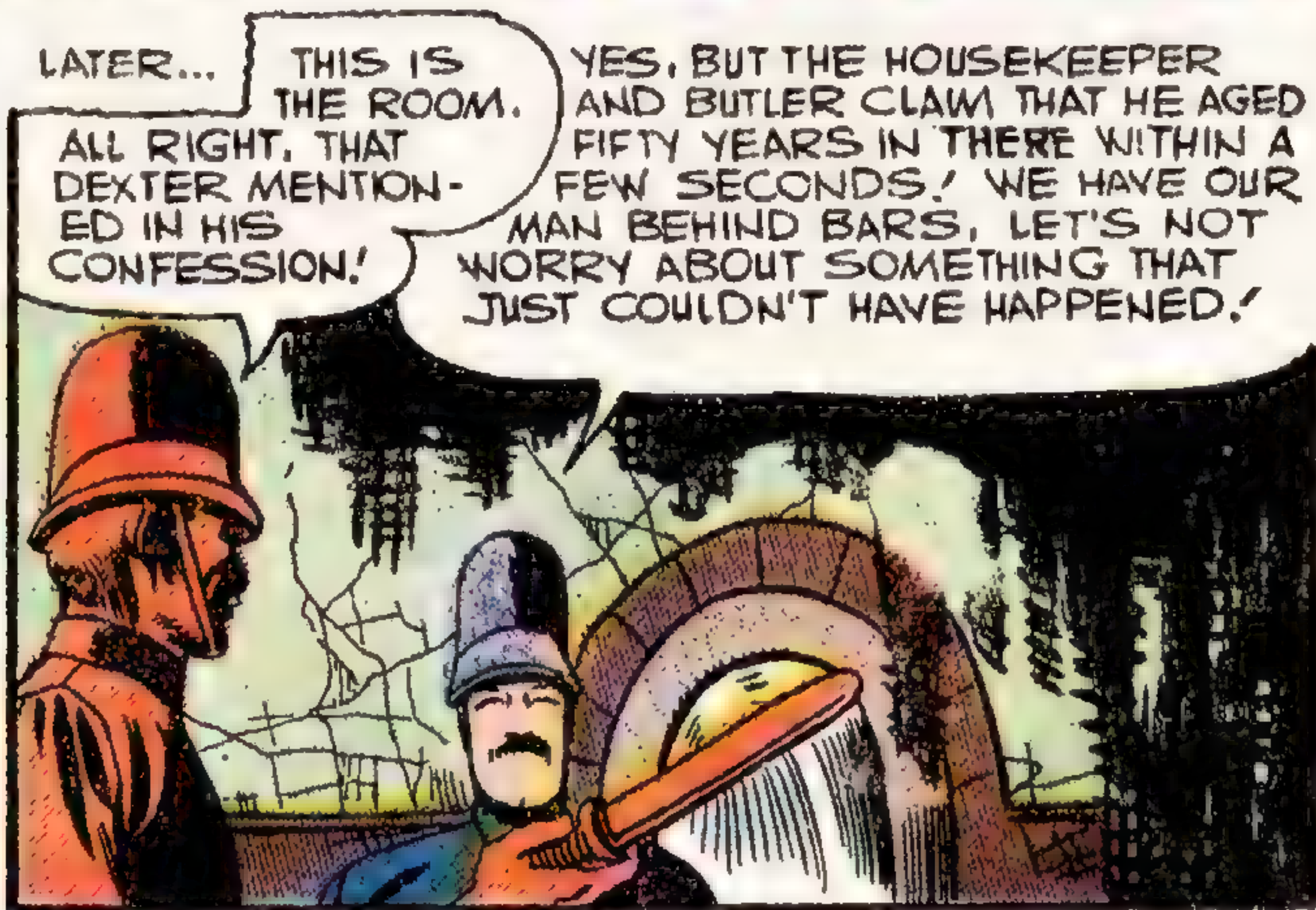
... AND LOOK (GROAN) AT MY HAND!!



THE ROOM IS ACCURSED! AND THIS (SOB) IS MY PUNISHMENT!



YOU WERE RIGHT! LOOK! LOOK AT WHAT THE ROOM HAS DONE TO ME! (SOB)



LATER...

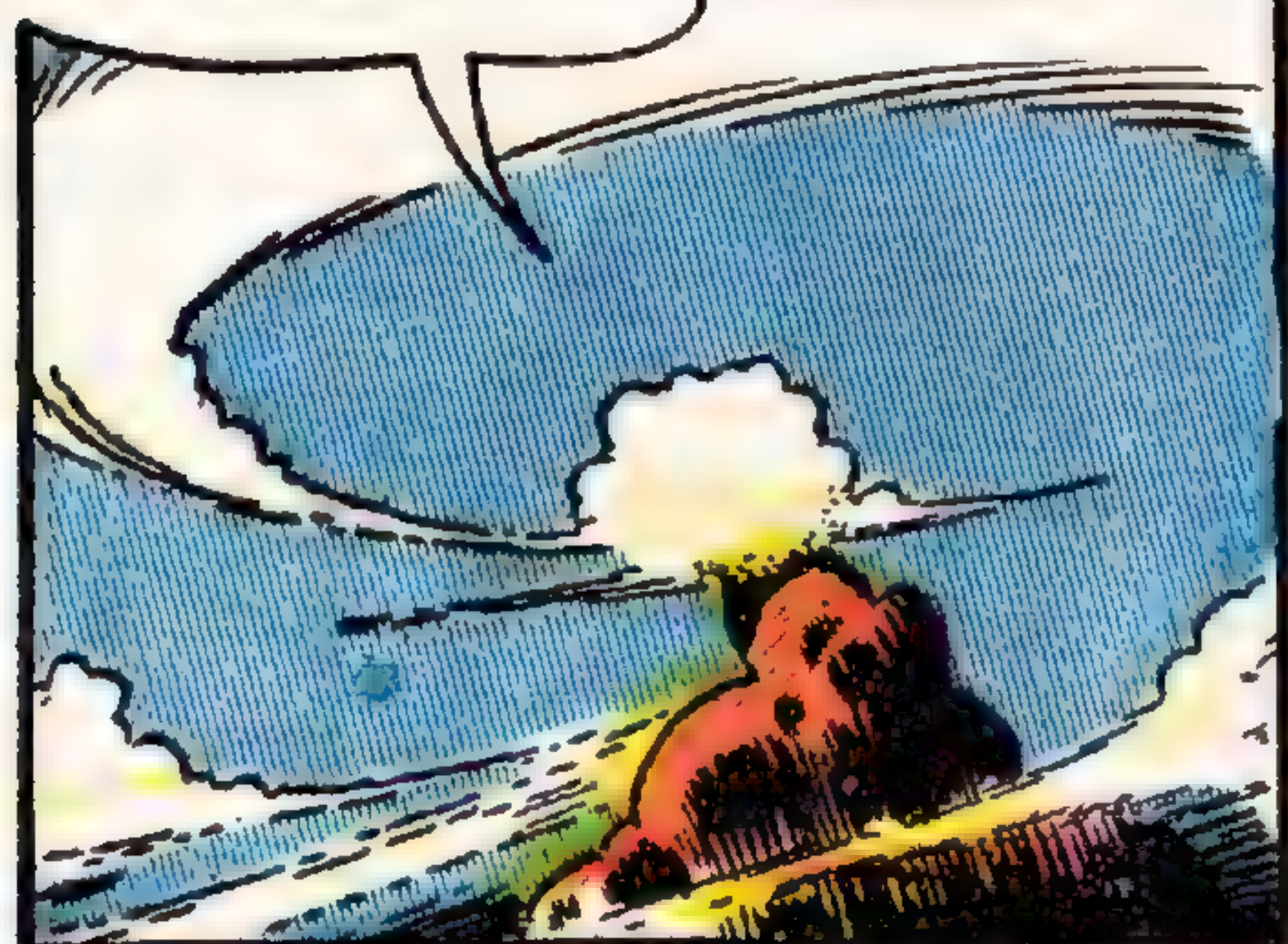
THIS IS THE ROOM.

ALL RIGHT, THAT DEXTER MENTIONED IN HIS CONFESSION!

YES, BUT THE HOUSEKEEPER AND BUTLER CLAIM THAT HE AGED FIFTY YEARS IN THERE WITHIN A FEW SECONDS! WE HAVE OUR MAN BEHIND BARS, LET'S NOT WORRY ABOUT SOMETHING THAT JUST COULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED!

COULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED? LET US SEE...

IT MUST NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN! NEVER! THOSE GRAINS OF SAND CARRIED OFF BY THE WIND CAN CAUSE TIME TO JUMP AHEAD FIFTY YEARS IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF ANY ENCLOSURE THEY COME TO REST IN!

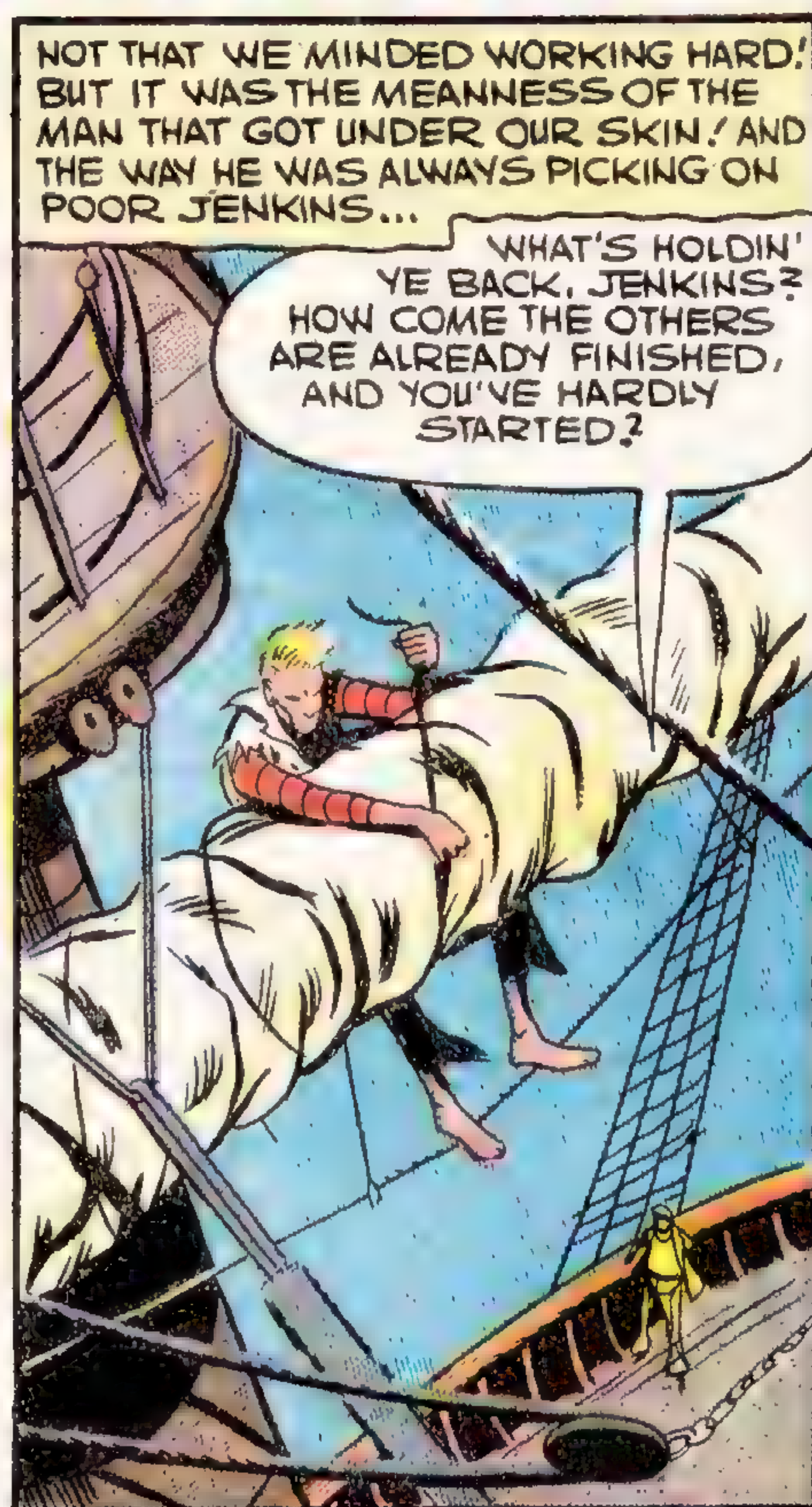


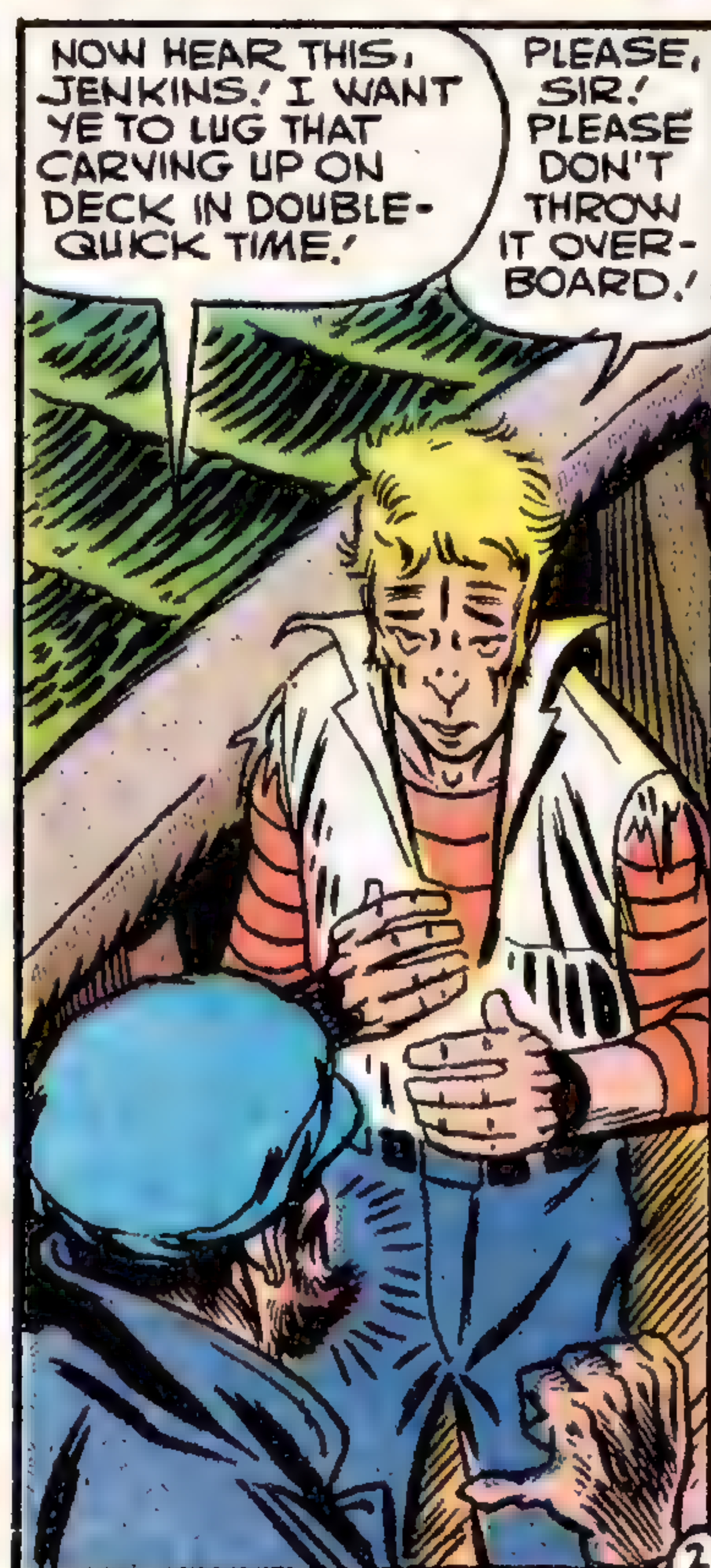
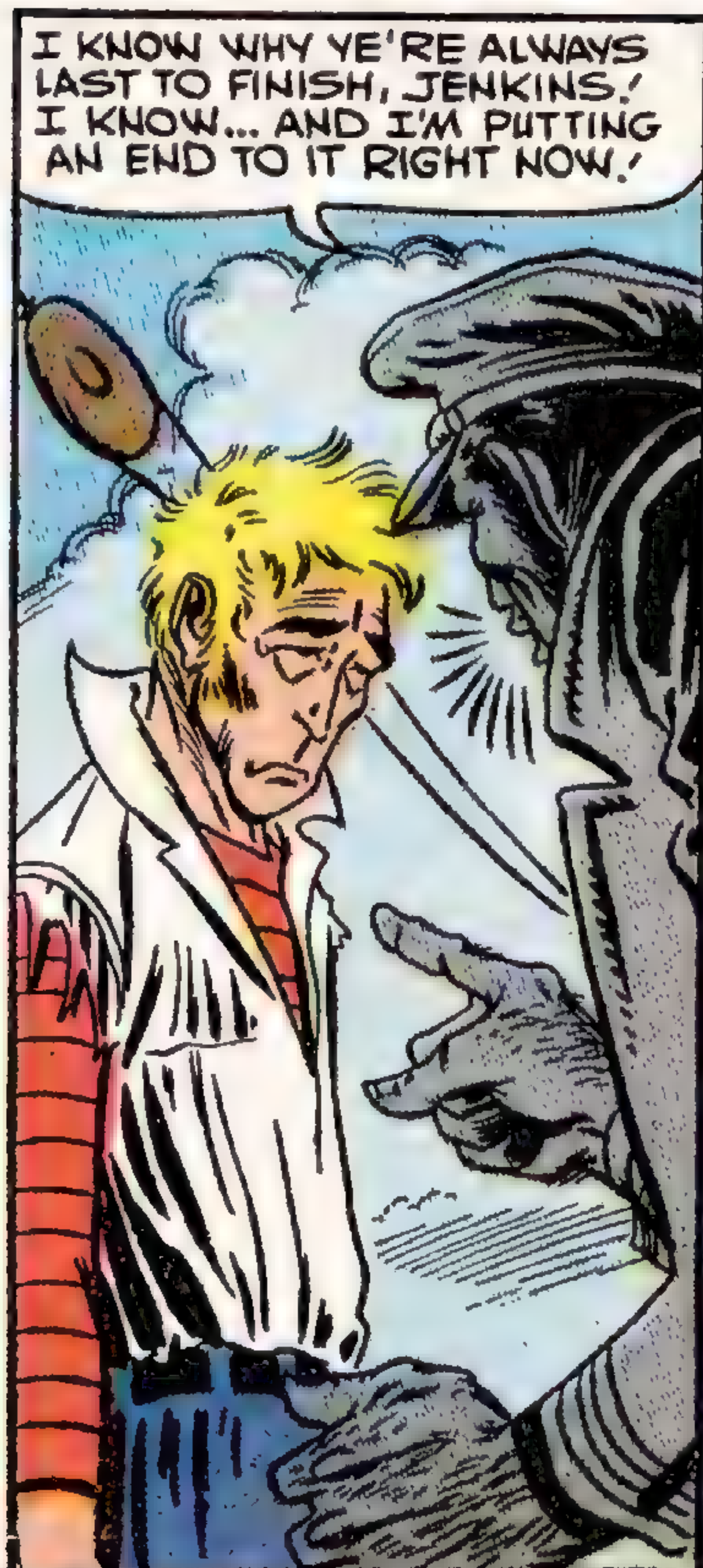
FORTUNATELY, IT WAS NOT AN ILL WIND THAT BORE THEM OFF! BUT IT MUST NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN! NEVER!

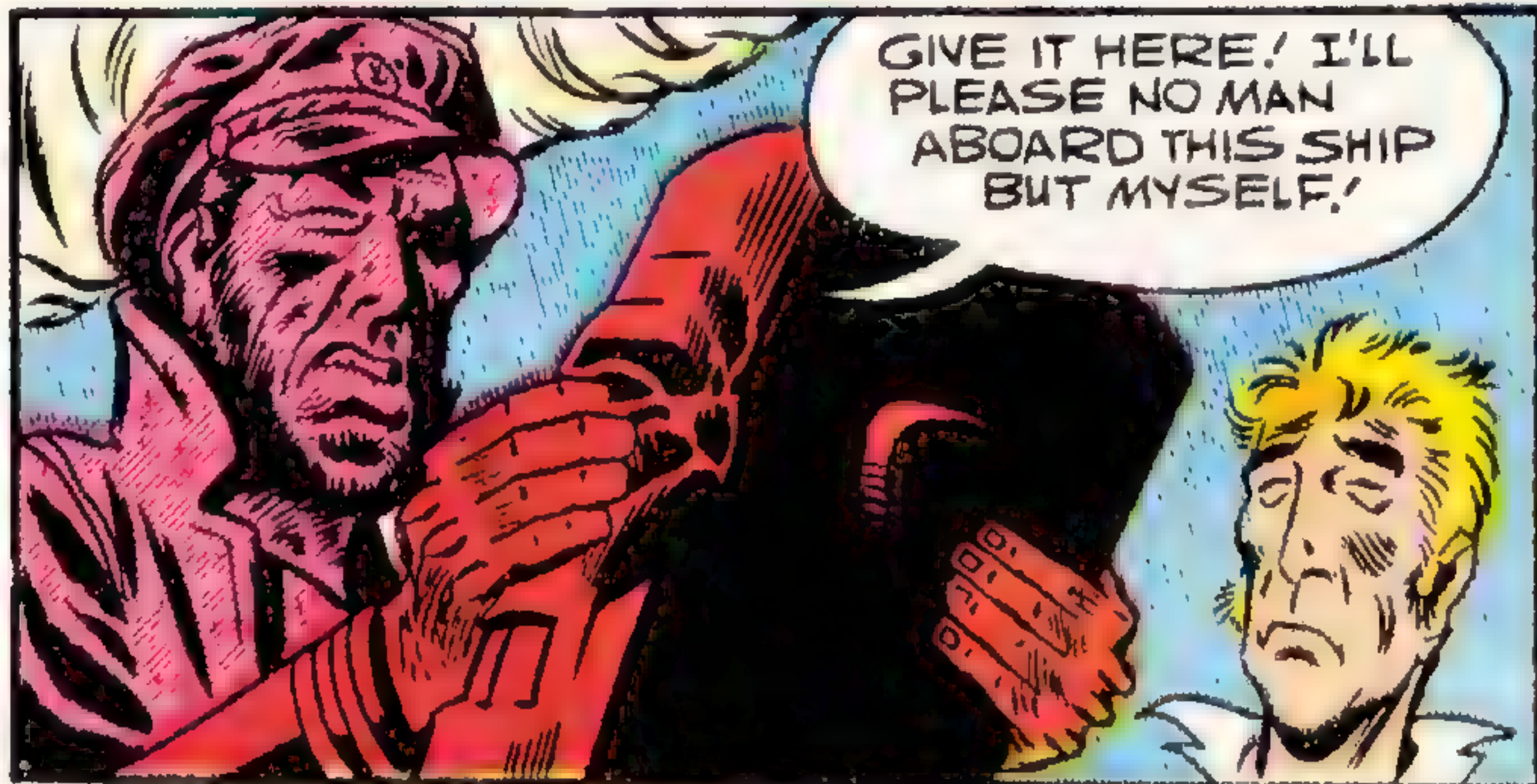
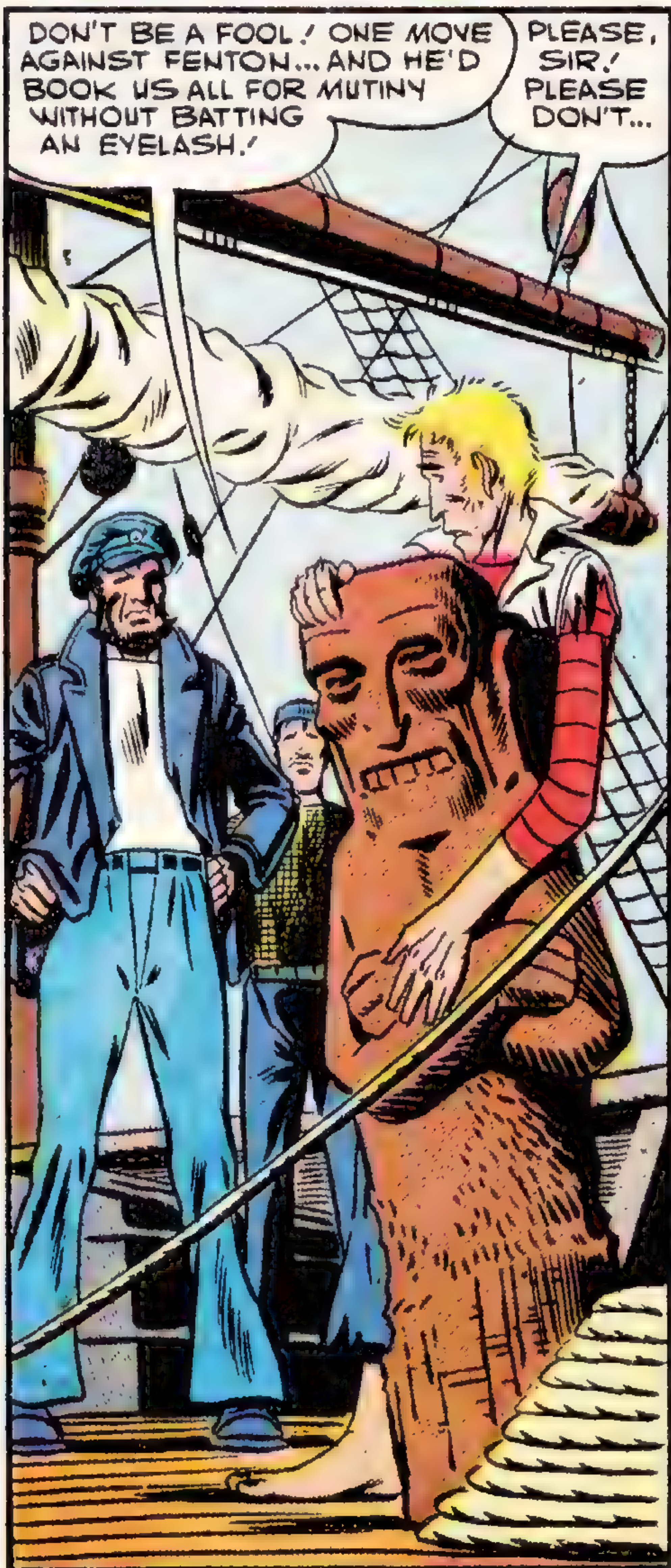


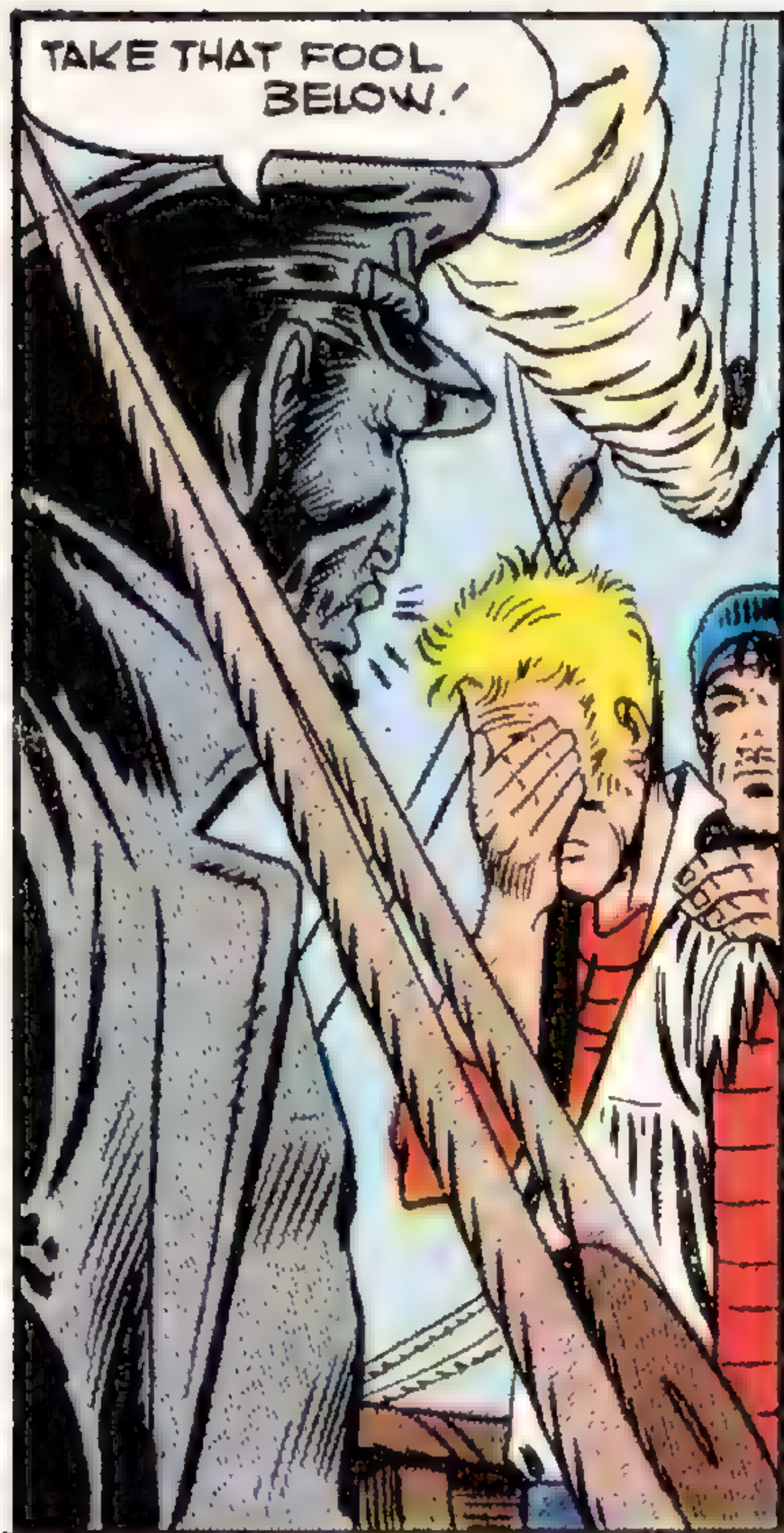
END

The **STRANGE FATE** OF **CAPTAIN FENTON**









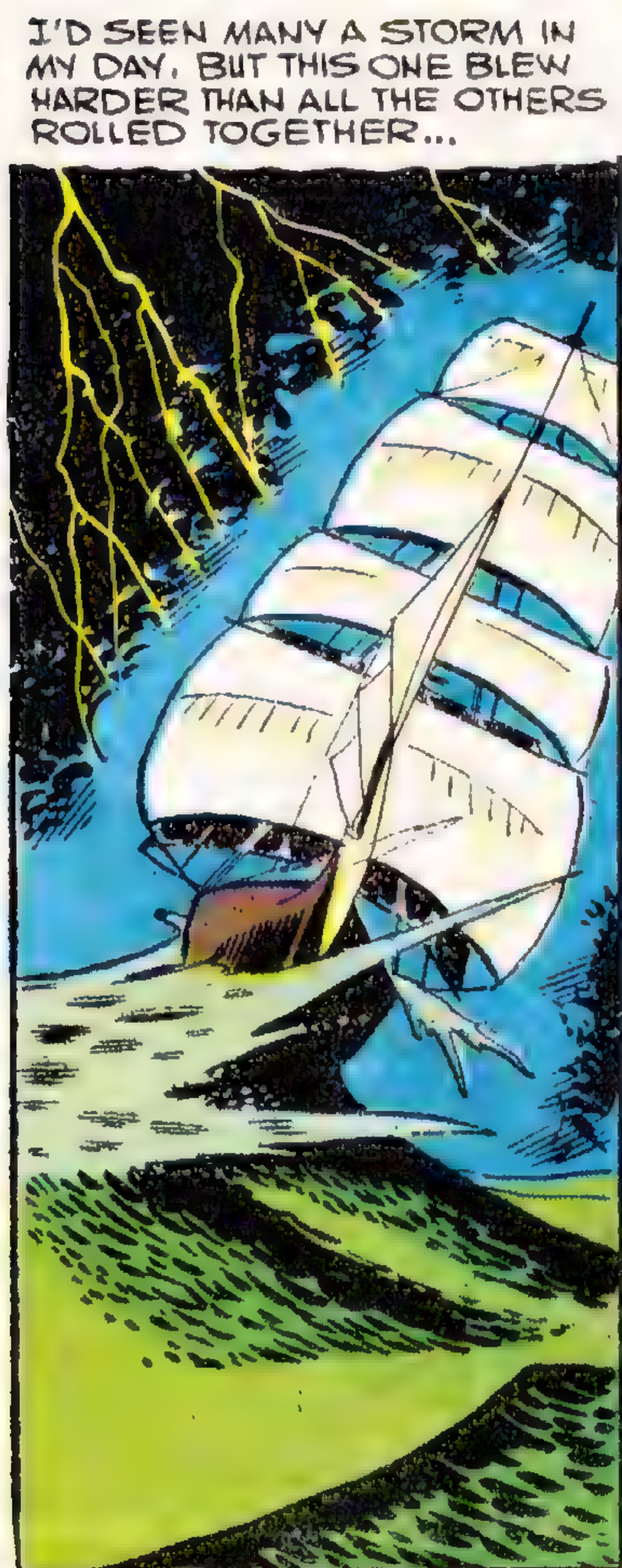
TAKE THAT FOOL
BELOW!



AND DON'T LET A MAN JACK OF
YOU BREATHE A WORD ABOUT
THAT USELESS PIECE OF
CARVING IN MY PRESENCE
AGAIN!



HE WAS SKIPPER! HIS WORD
WAS LAW! HOW COULD HE BE
MADE TO PAY FOR HIS NEEDLESS
CRUELTY? THERE WAS NO WAY
THAT WE COULD SEE! BUT
THEN THE SKY DARKENED...

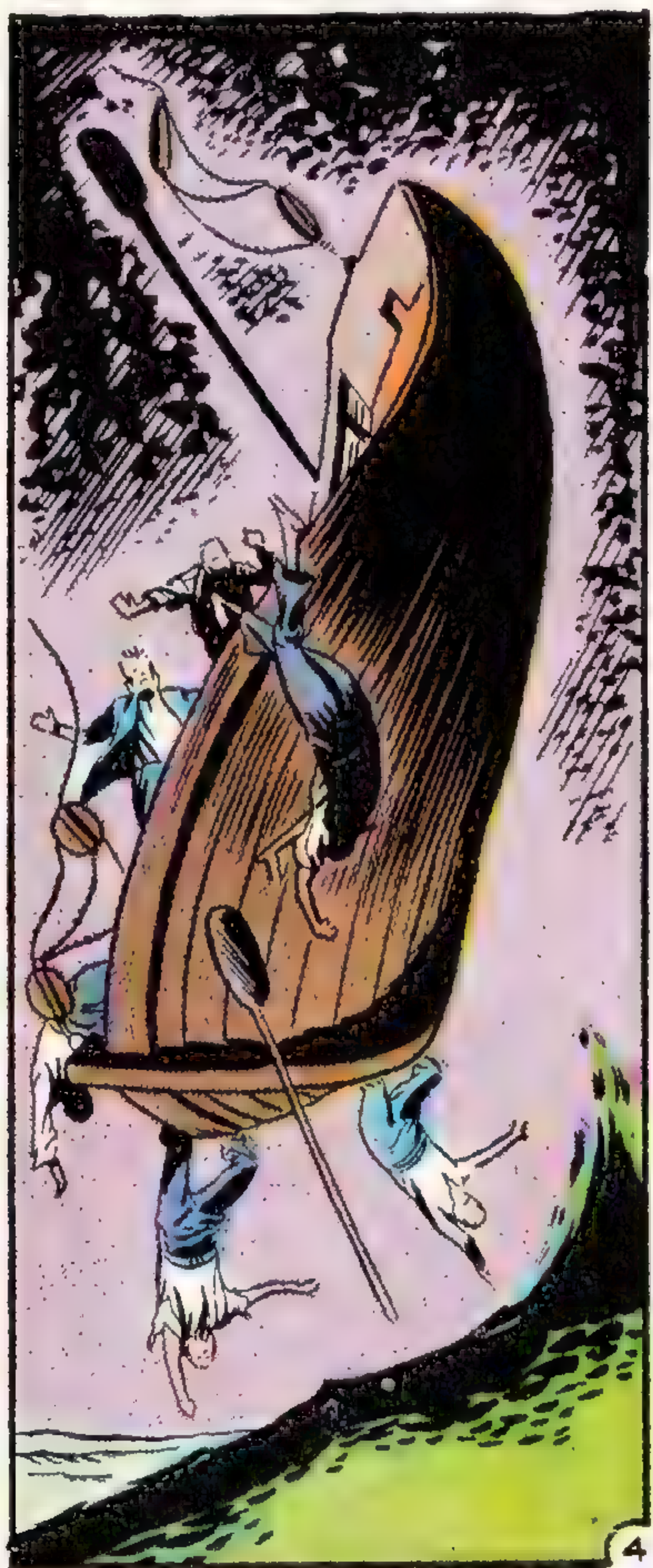


I'D SEEN MANY A STORM IN
MY DAY, BUT THIS ONE BLEW
HARDER THAN ALL THE OTHERS
ROLLED TOGETHER...



AND BEFORE LONG...

SHE'S GOING DOWN!
EVERYBODY INTO
THE LONGBOAT!



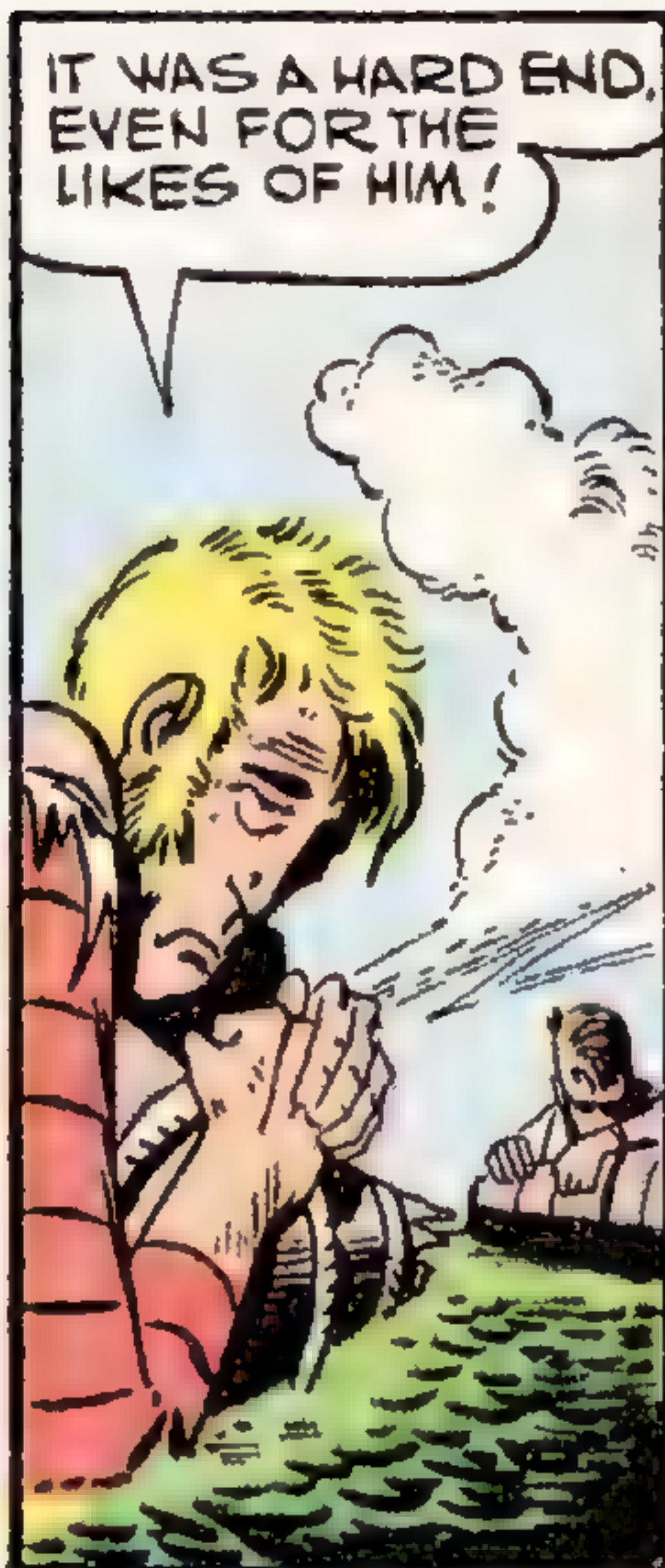
BUT THE DNOT SNAPPED...

WE WERE DEAD SURE WE WERE HEADED FOR DAVY JONES' LOCKER! BUT AFTER FLUNDERING ABOUT AWHILE...

NOT A MAN MISSING... EXCEPT CAPTAIN FENTON!

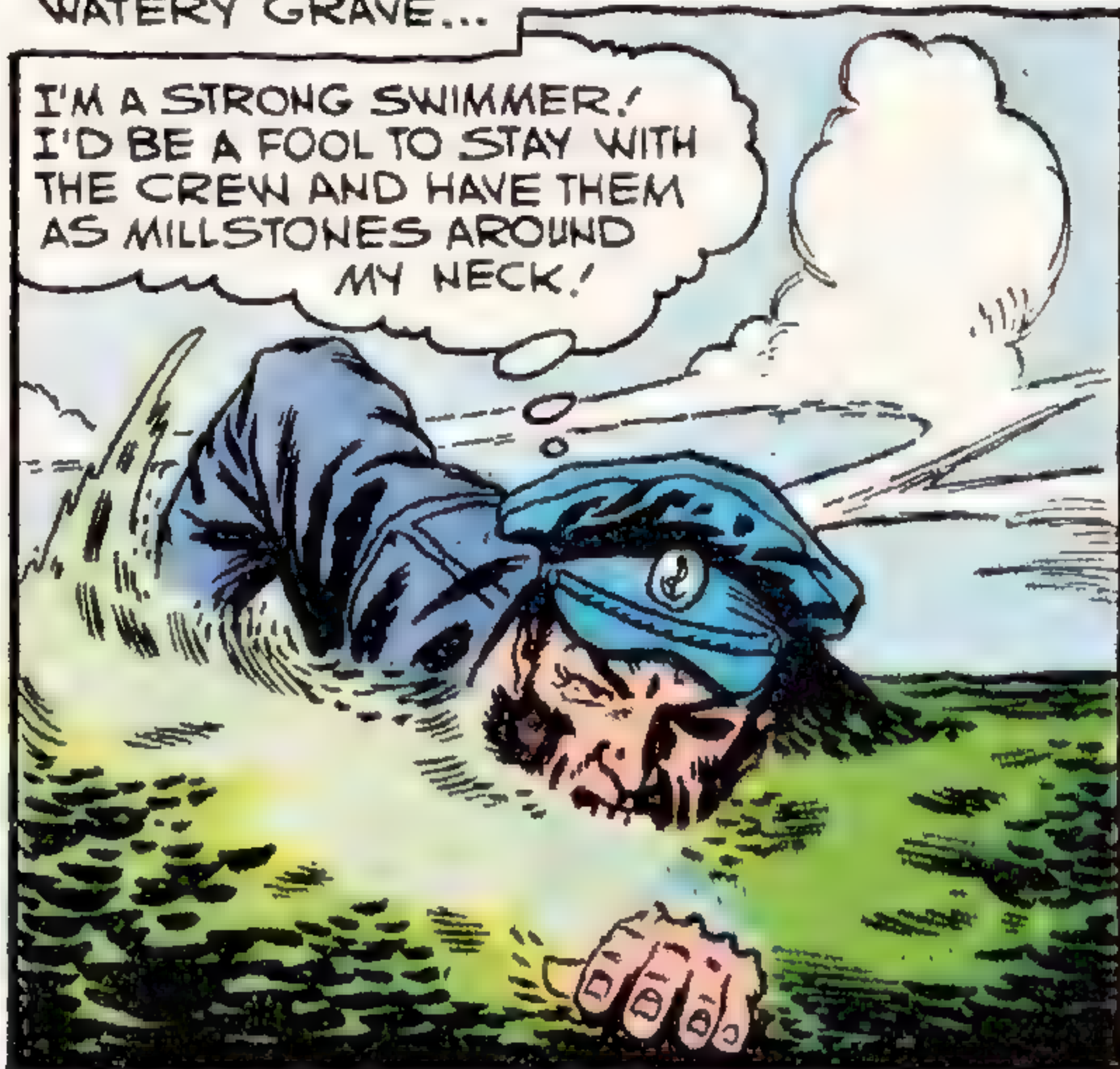


IT WAS A HARD END, EVEN FOR THE LIKES OF HIM!



HOW COULD WE HAVE KNOWN THEN AND THERE THAT CAPTAIN FENTON HAD NOT GONE TO A WATERY GRAVE...

I'M A STRONG SWIMMER! I'D BE A FOOL TO STAY WITH THE CREW AND HAVE THEM AS MILLSTONES AROUND MY NECK!

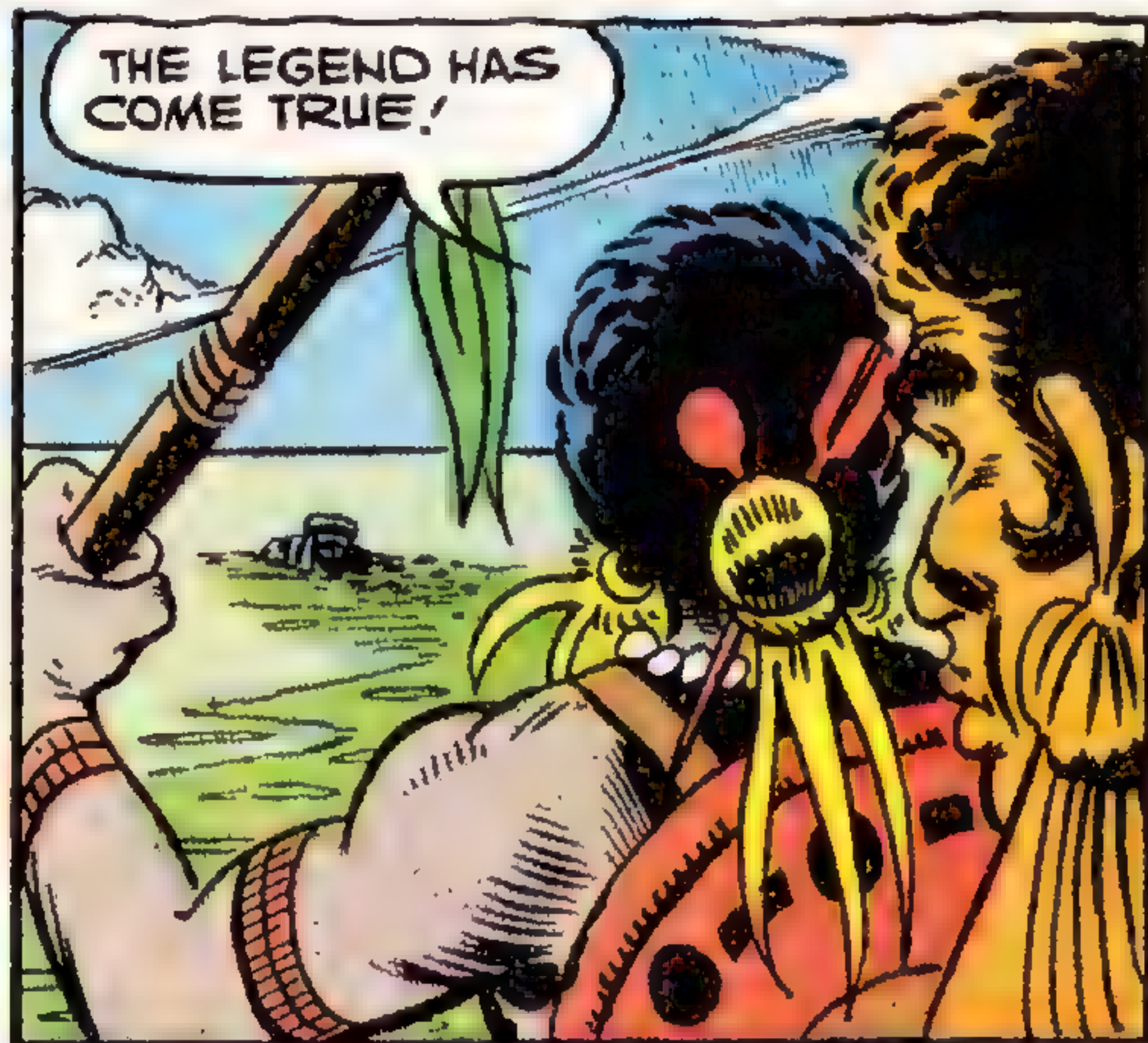


THERE'S AN ISLAND NEARBY! I'LL MAKE FOR IT!

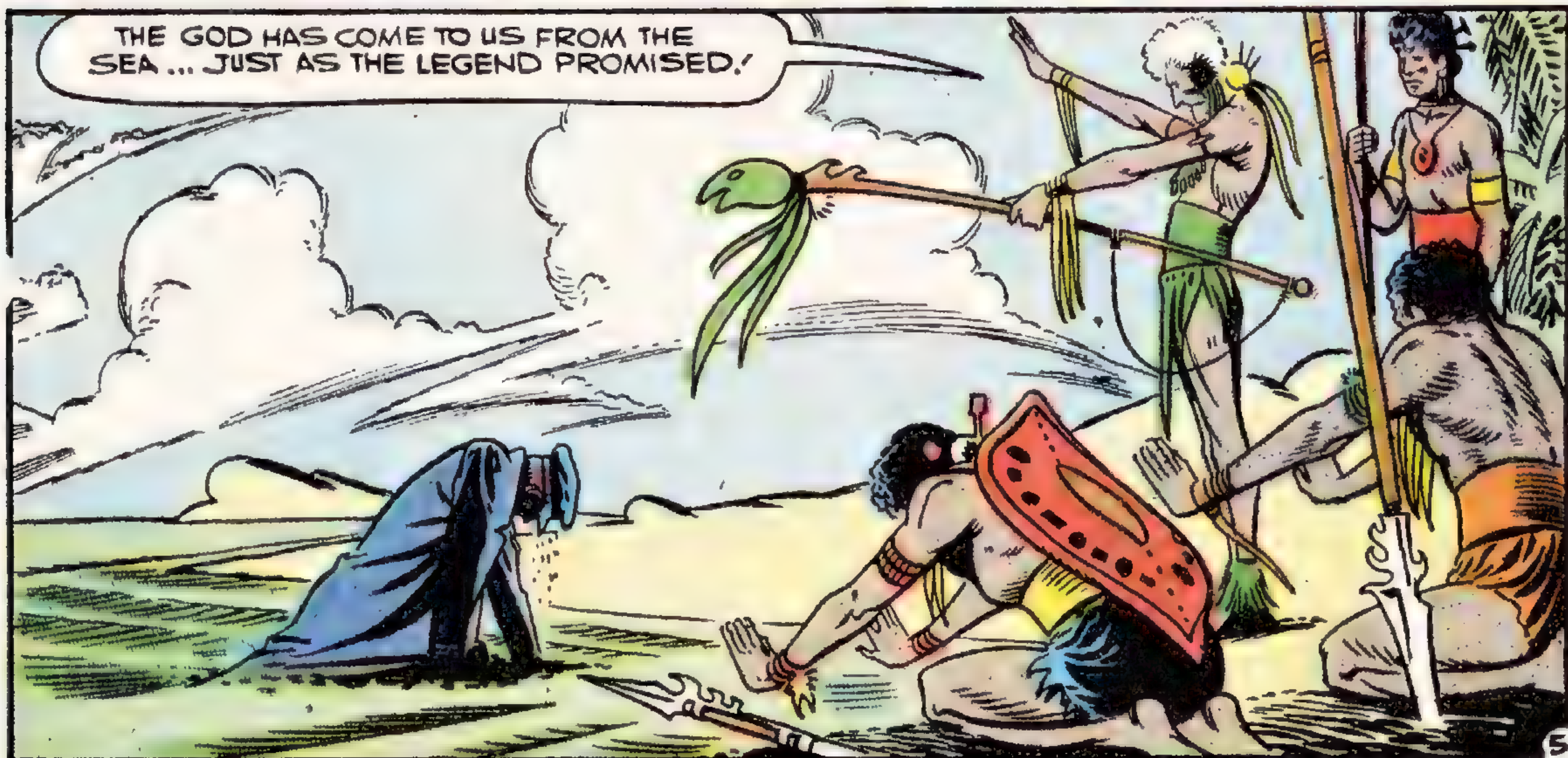


IT WAS LATER THAT WE HEARD THE STRANGE FATE OF CAPTAIN FENTON! THE NATIVES THEMSELVES TOLD US HOW THEY FIRST SAW HIM BOBBING IN THE SURF...

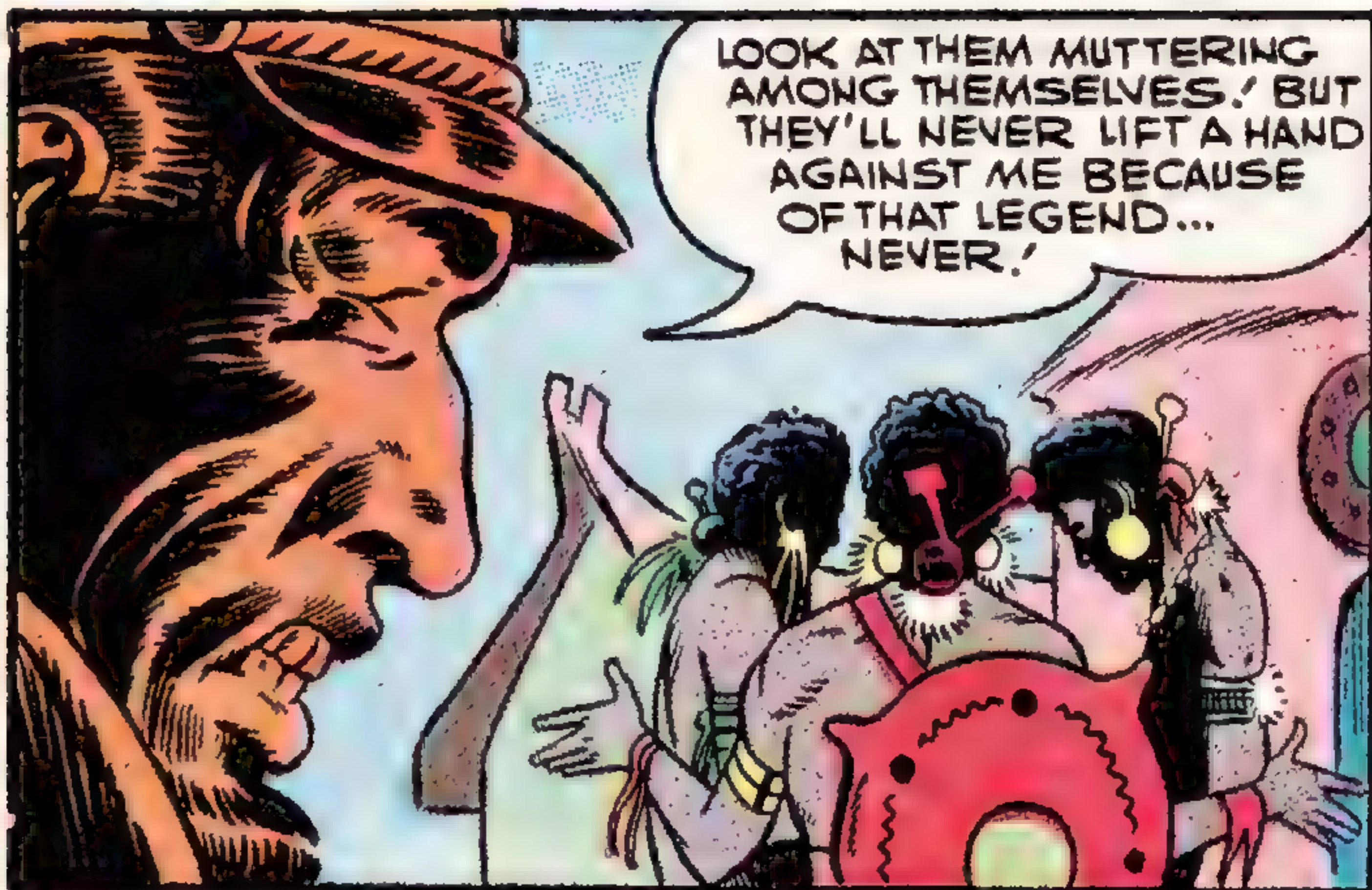
THE LEGEND HAS COME TRUE!



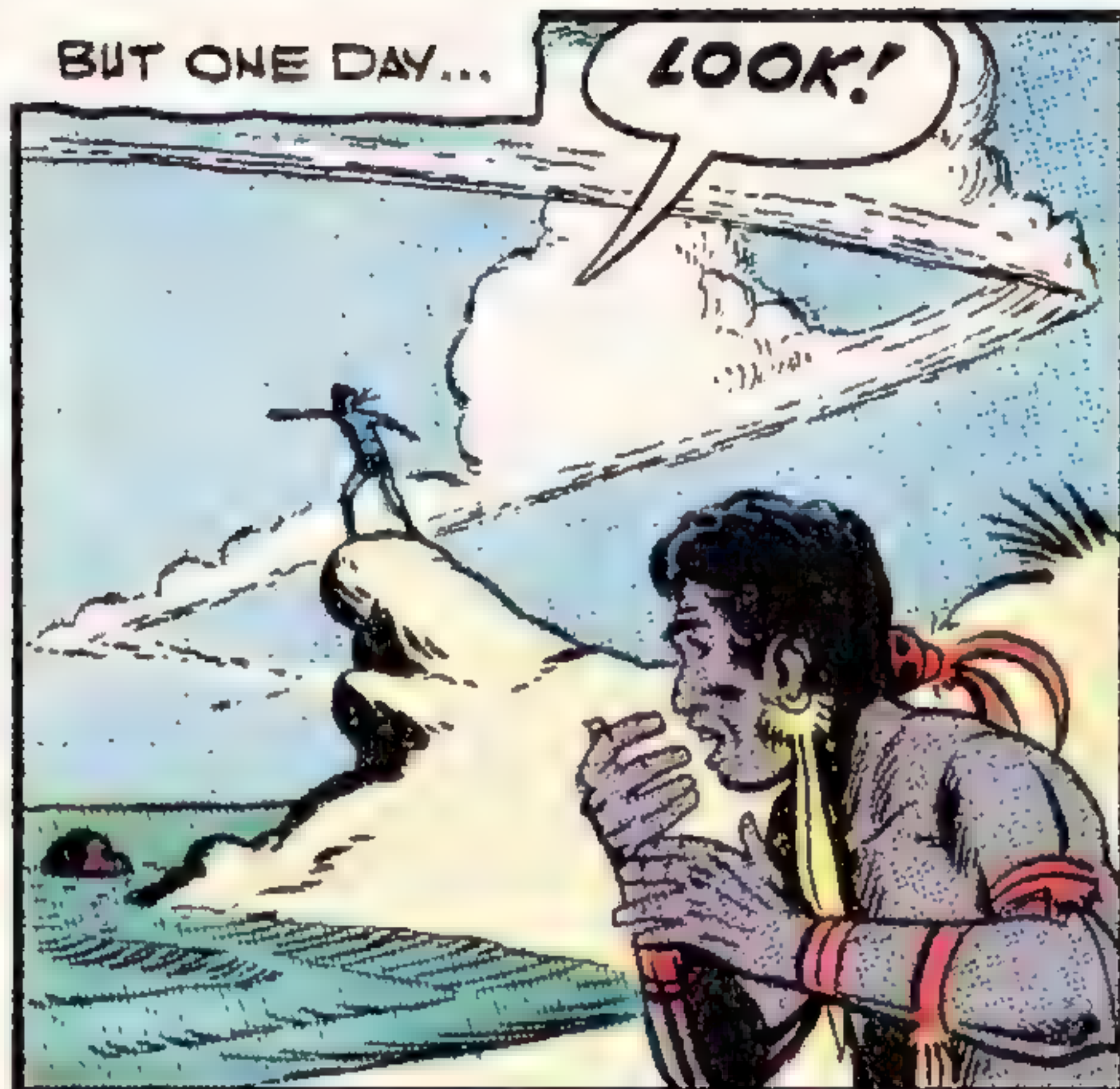
THE GOD HAS COME TO US FROM THE SEA ... JUST AS THE LEGEND PROMISED!







LOOK AT THEM MUTTERING AMONG THEMSELVES! BUT THEY'LL NEVER LIFT A HAND AGAINST ME BECAUSE OF THAT LEGEND... NEVER!



BUT ONE DAY...

LOOK!



AND NOT LONG AFTER...

HAVE YE ALL GONE MAD? YE KNOW THE LEGEND! YE KNOW WHO I AM! YE KNOW WHAT'LL HAPPEN IF YE DARE LIFT A FINGER AGAINST ME!



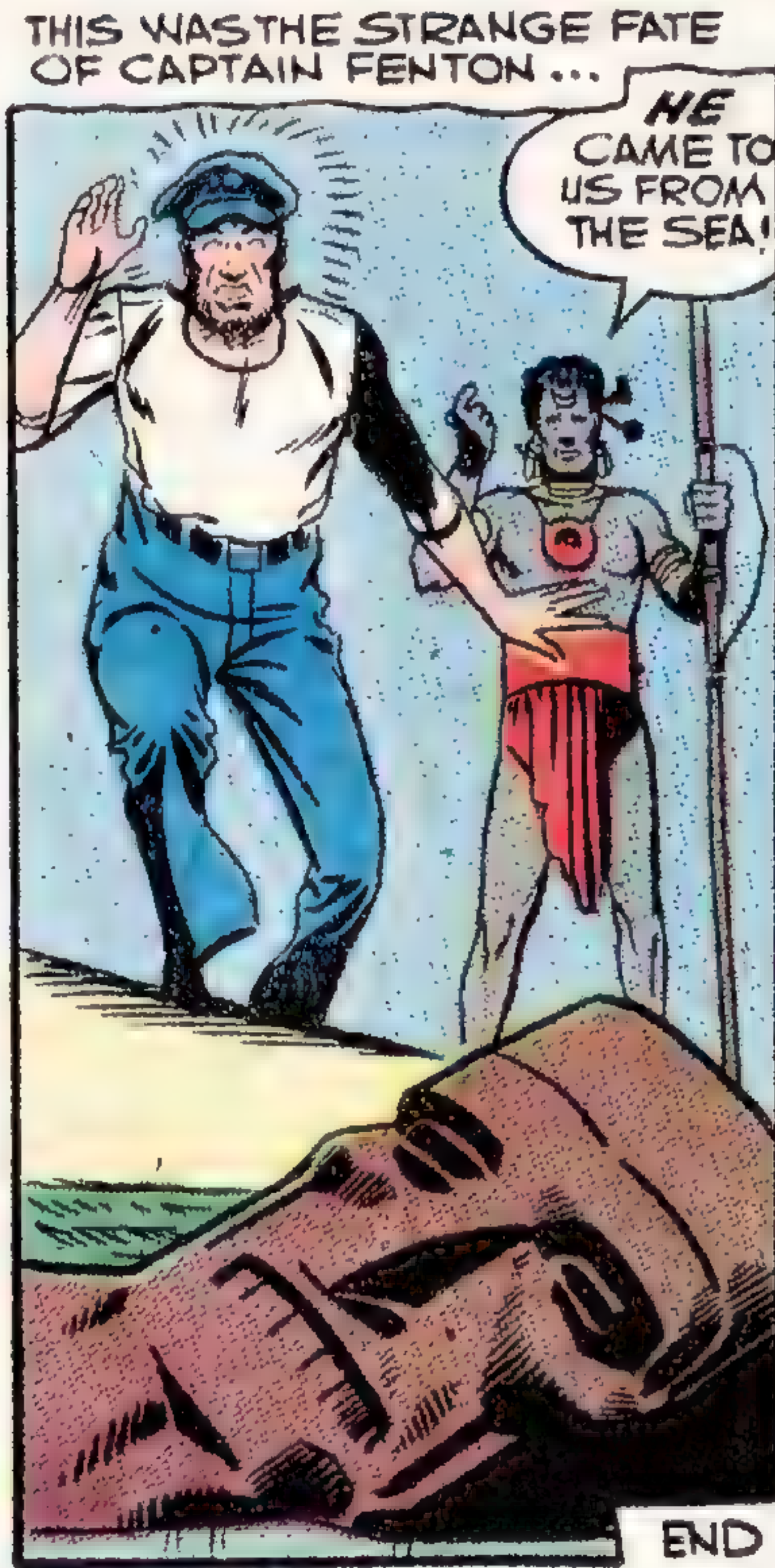
THE TRUE GOD HAS COME TO SAVE US FROM YOU!

COME DOWN TO THE BEACH AND SEE FOR YOURSELF BEFORE YOU ARE TRIED BY THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS!



THIS IS HOW THE TALE ENDS...

WE KNOW *HIM* TO BE THE TRUE GOD! FOR NOW WHEN THERE ARE TROUBLED TIMES...



THIS WAS THE STRANGE FATE OF CAPTAIN FENTON...

HE CAME TO US FROM THE SEA!

END

THIS MAGAZINE IS HAUNTED



THIS MAGAZINE IS

HAUNTED

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

Vol. 2
No. 12

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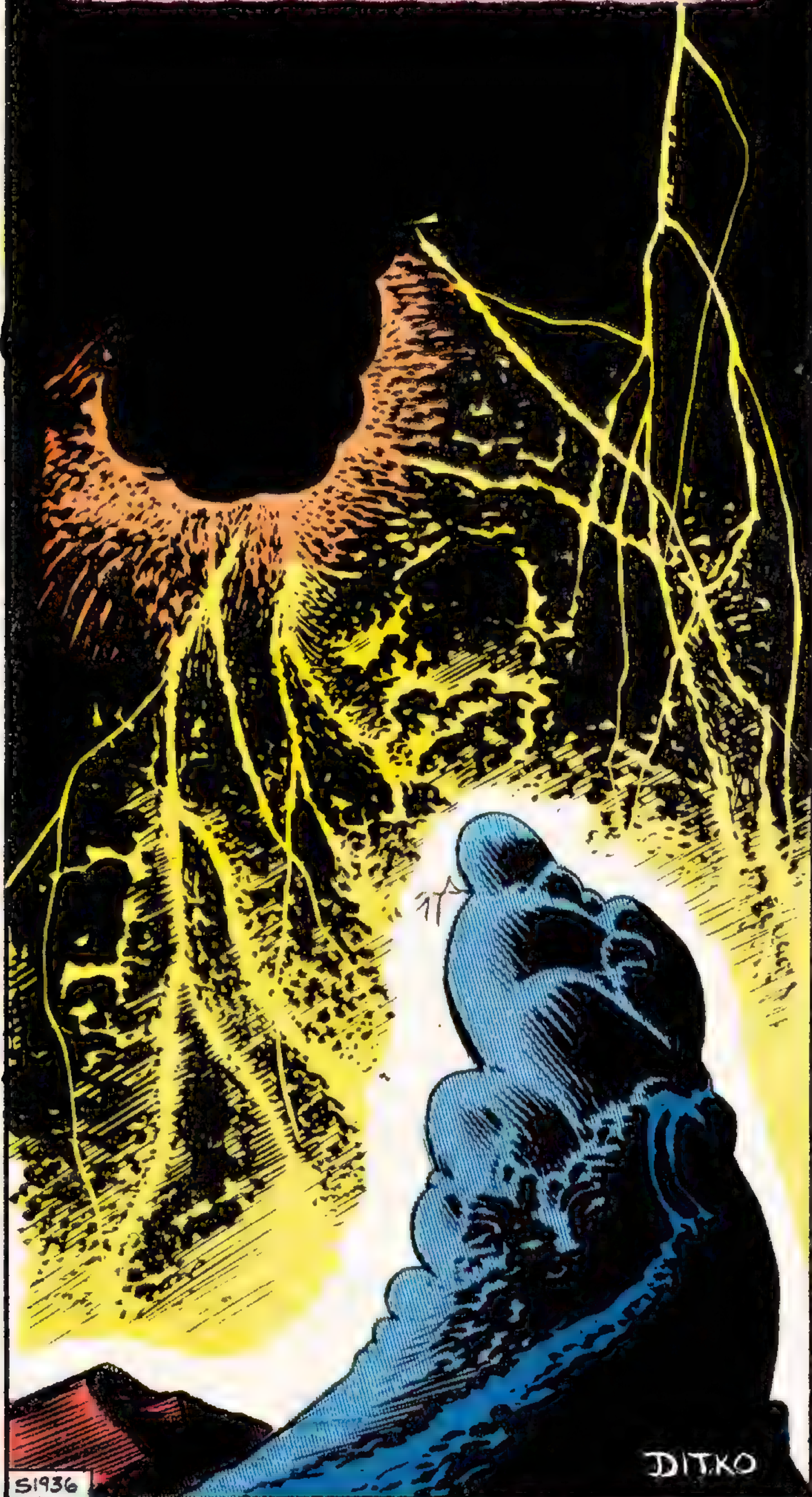
A CHARLTON PUBLICATION



DR. HAUNT REVEALS
THE SECRET OF
"THE THING ON
THE BEACH!"

The **LAST ONE**

THE STORM RUMBLES THUNDEROUSLY ACROSS THE TURBULENT SKY / THE WIND SHRIEKS AND WAILS, AS IF IN TERROR, BUT IN THE SEALED CAVE UNDER THE MOUNTAIN SIDE, NOT A SOUND CAN BE HEARD. / THERE IS ONLY DARKNESS...



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DITKO

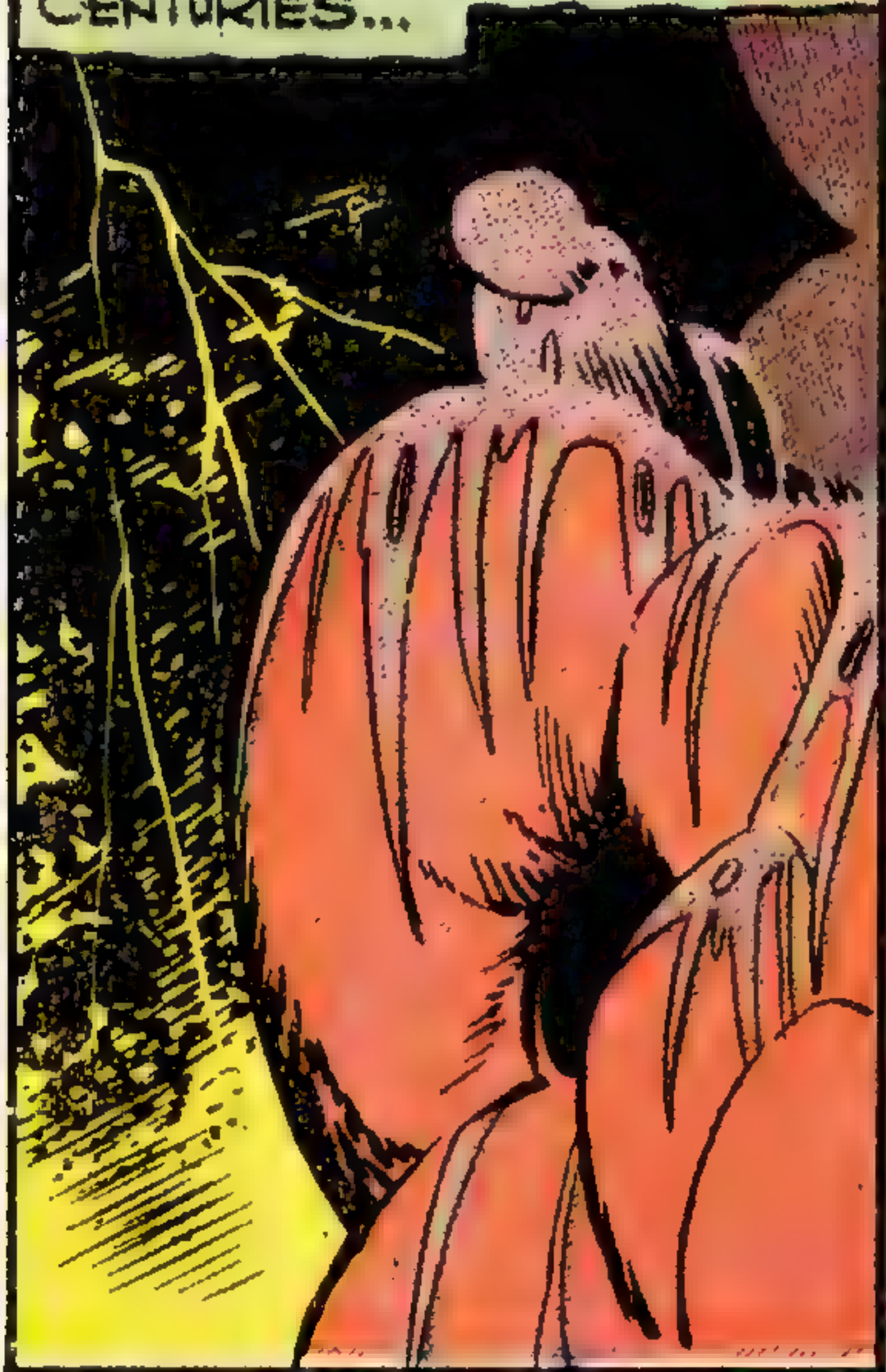
SUDDENLY...



THE FALLING TREE CAUSES AN AVALANCHE THAT MATCHES THE STORM'S OWN FURY...



THE BOULDERS HAVE COME TO REST NOW! BUT AS A RESULT OF THEIR SAVAGE DISPLACEMENT, A FISSURE GAPES OPEN IN THE MOUNTAIN-SIDE THAT HAD BEEN SEALED FOR CENTURIES...



AND WHEN THE STORM PASSES, A BEAM OF SUNLIGHT SLANTS DOWN INTO THE CAVE THAT HAD SO LONG BEEN SHROUDED BY DARKNESS...



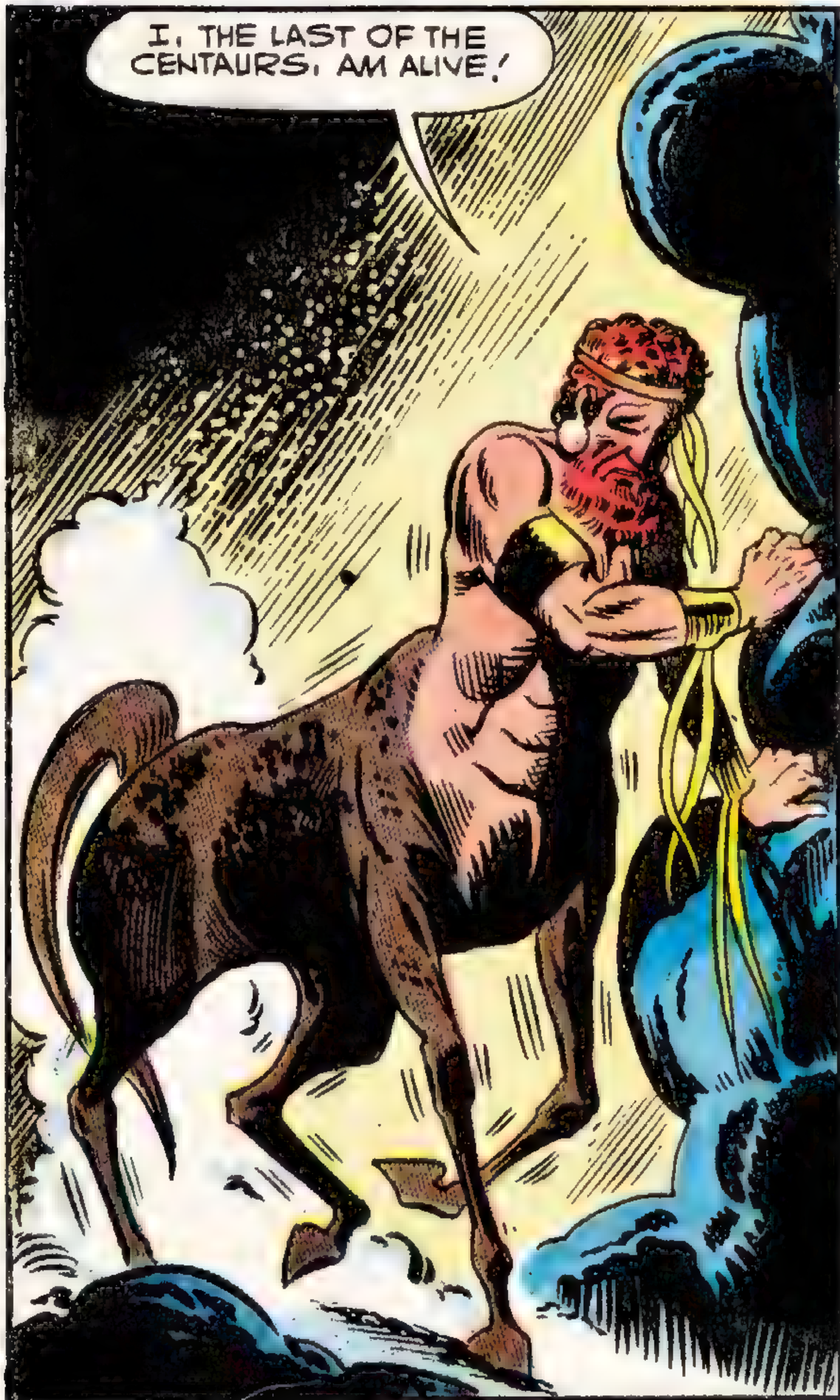
AND NOW SOMEONE STIRS INSIDE THE CAVE! SOMEONE WHO KNOWS NOW THAT...

I AM ALIVE!



BUT HIS LIMBS ARE WEAK FROM DISUSE, AND THE CENTAUR TOPPLES AFTER A FEW UNCERTAIN STEPS! AND NOW BITTER TEARS STREAM DOWN HIS CHEEKS AS HE REMEMBERS...

I, THE LAST OF THE CENTAURS, AM ALIVE!

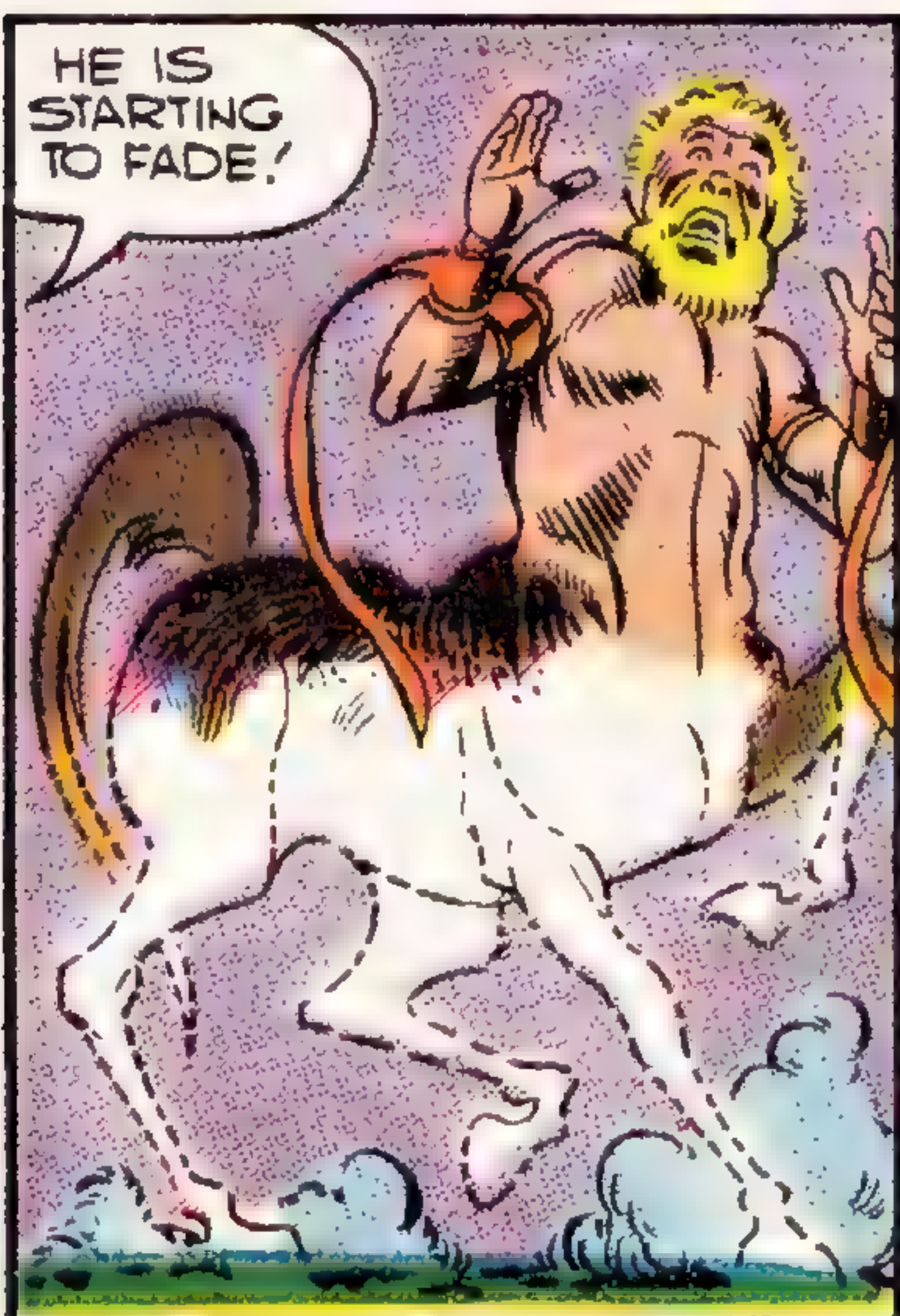
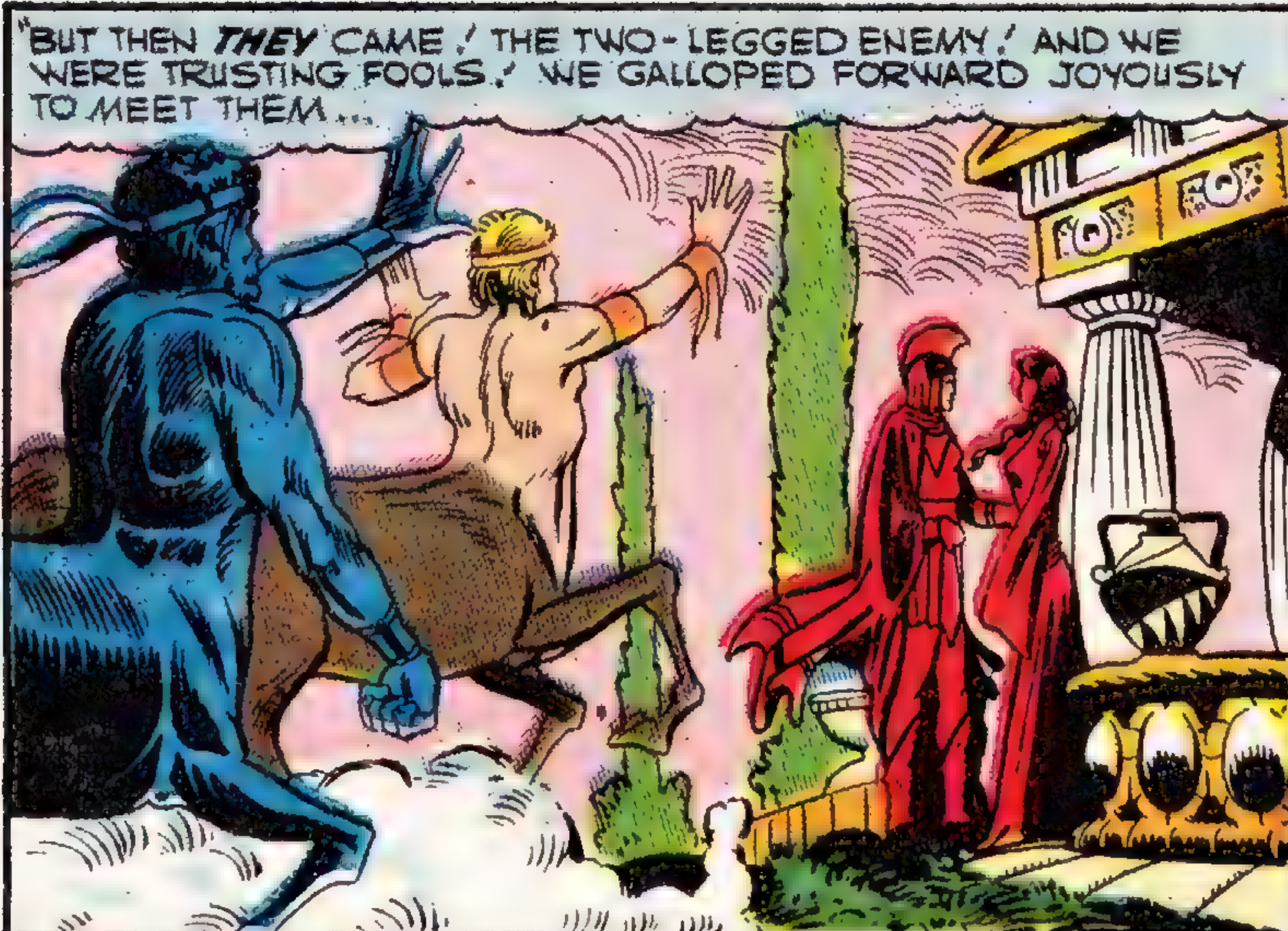


HOW STRONG I ONCE WAS! HOW STRONG WE ALL WERE...



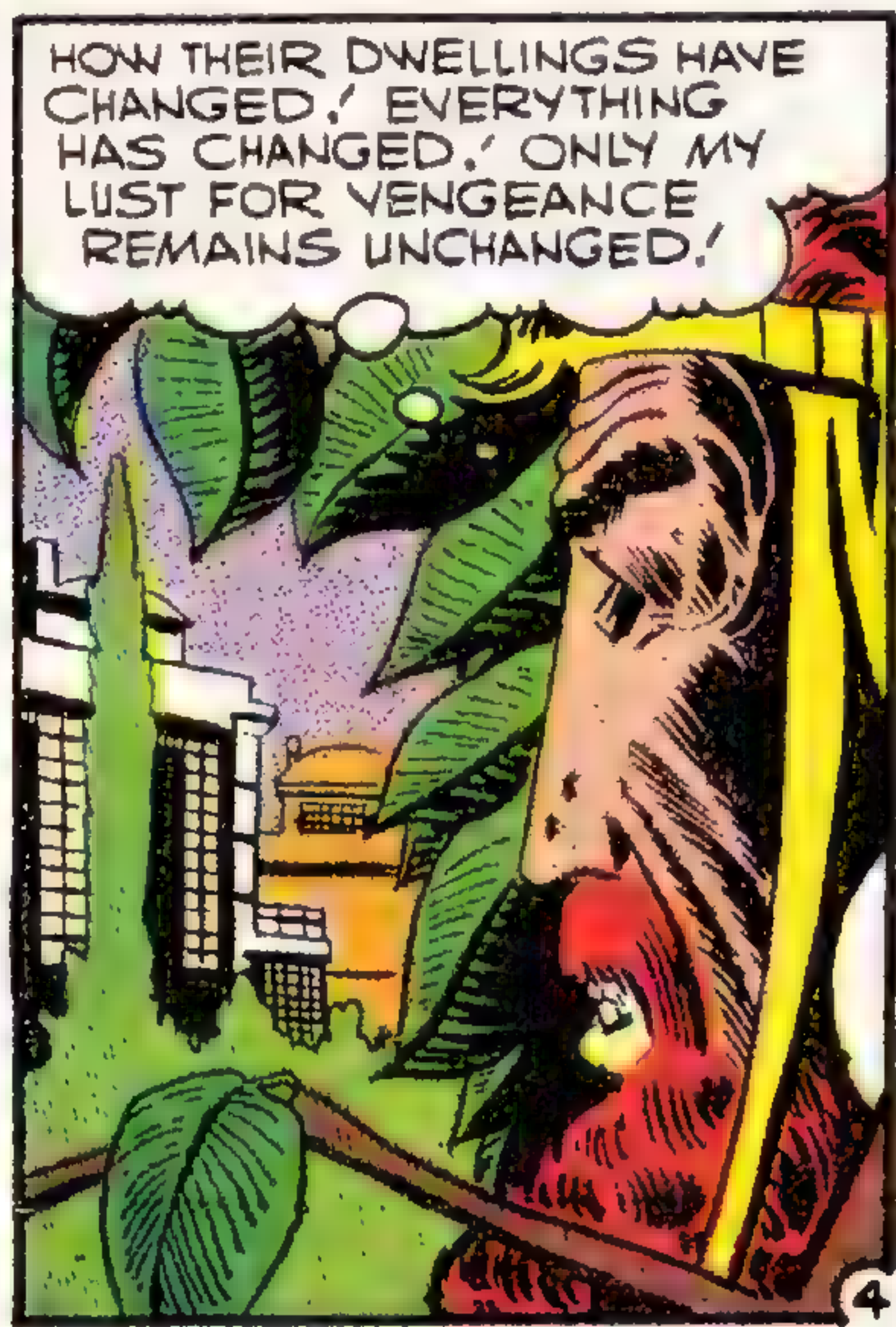
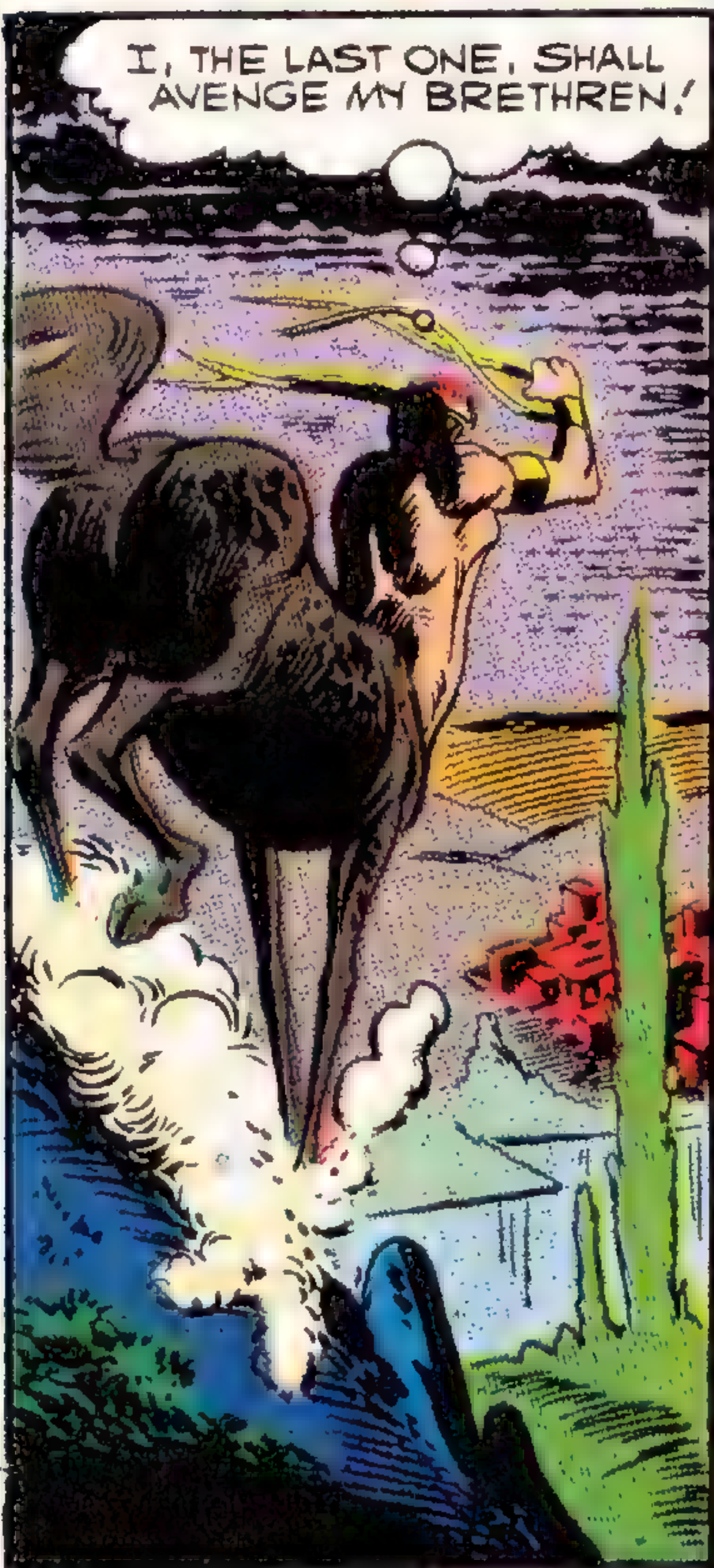
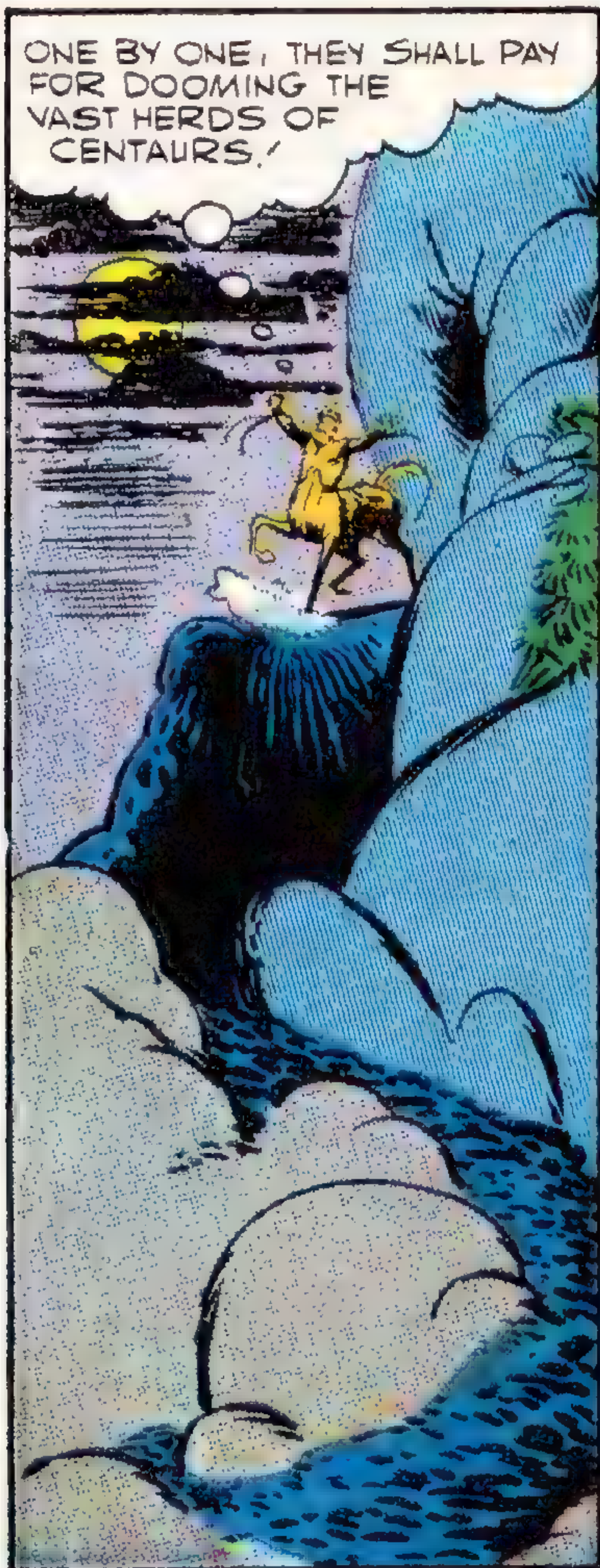
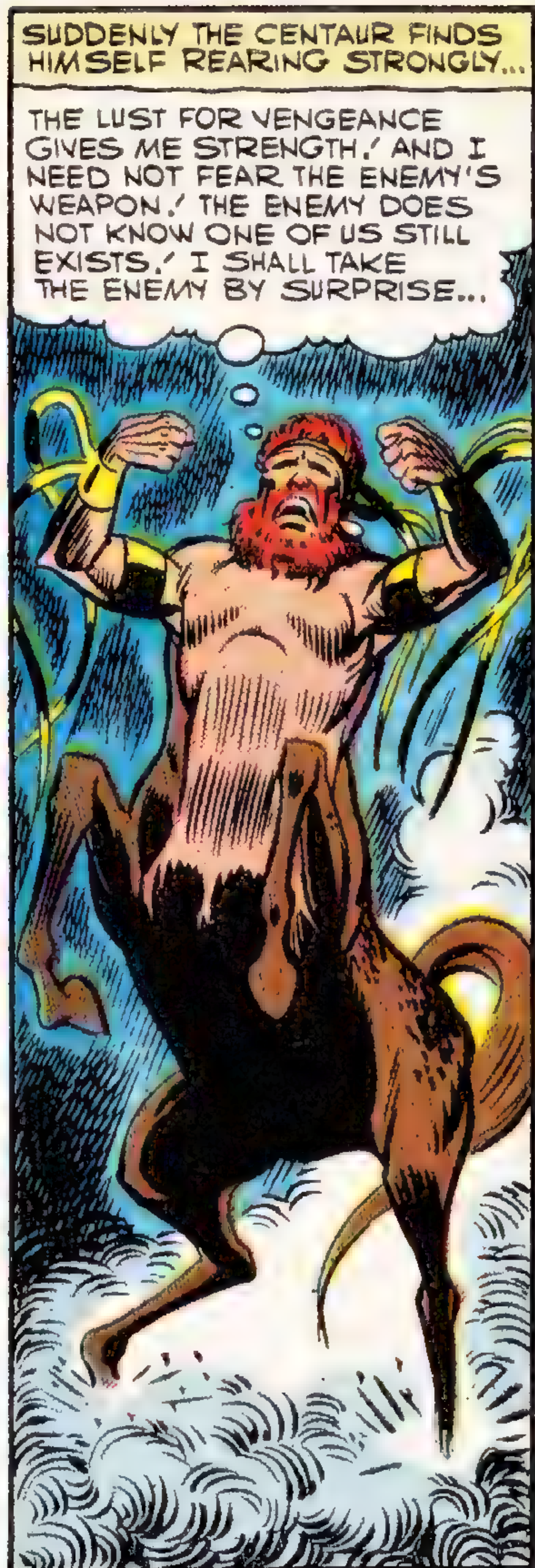
...AS WE GALLOPED IN VAST HERDS OVER THE FACE OF THE EARTH!





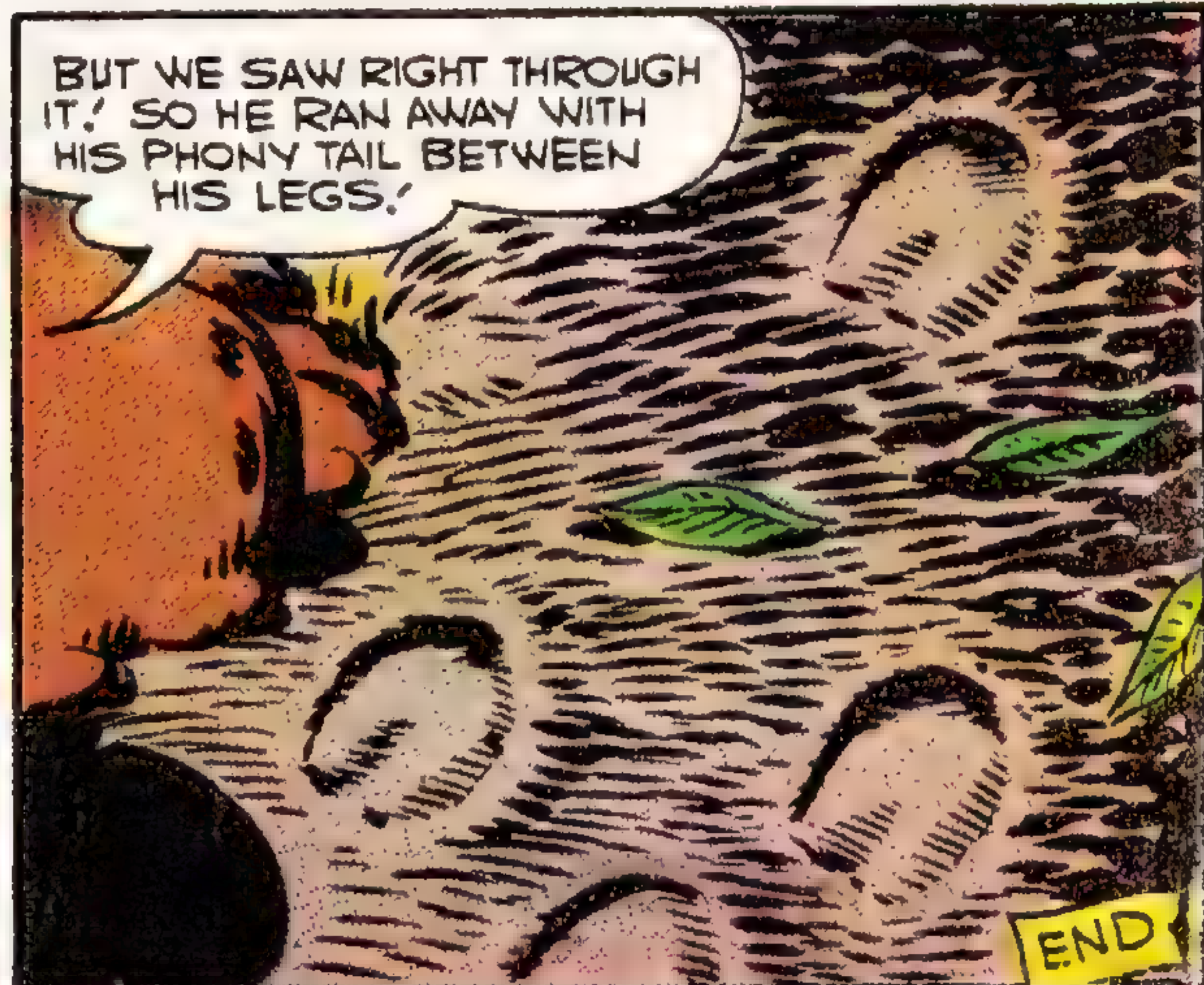
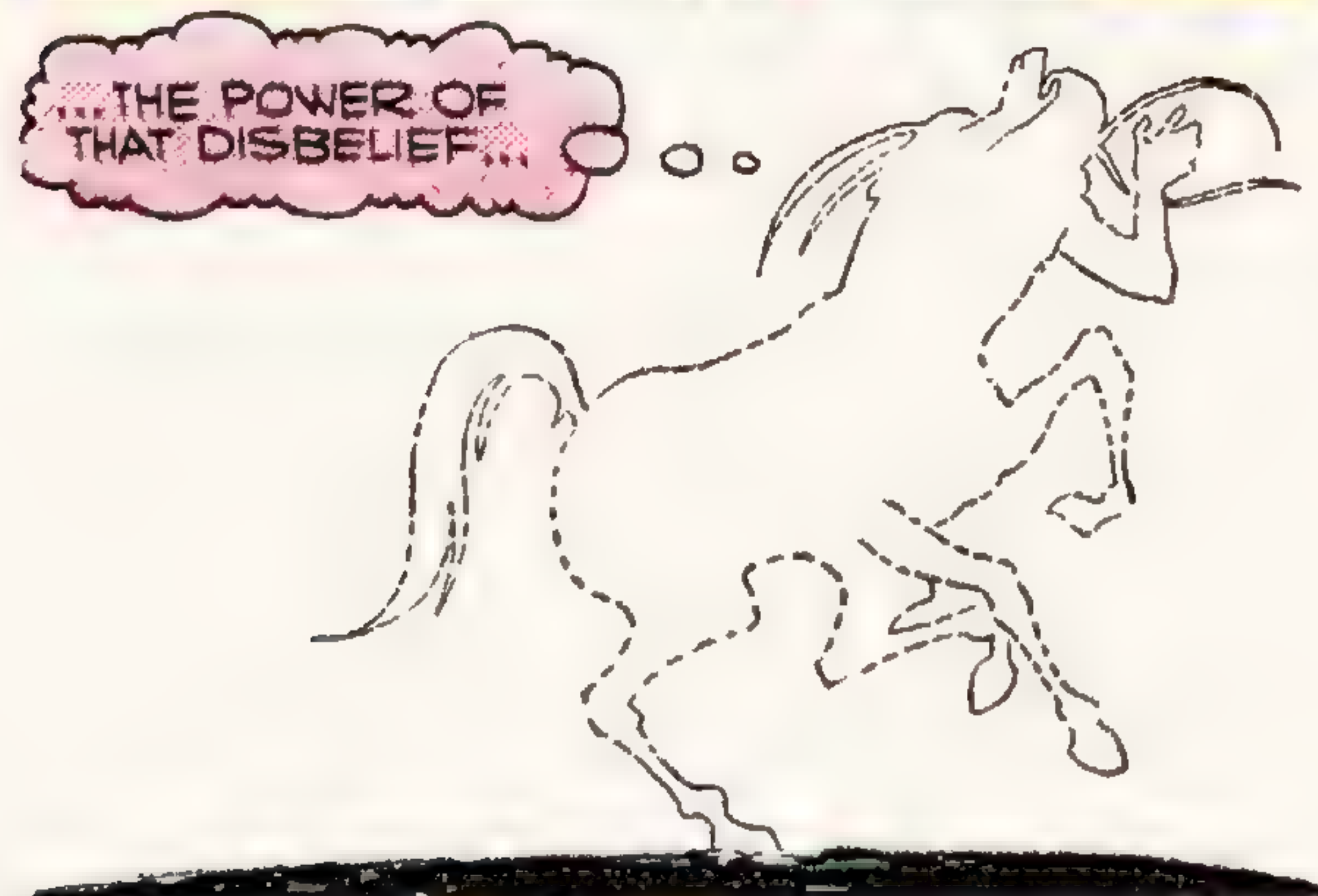
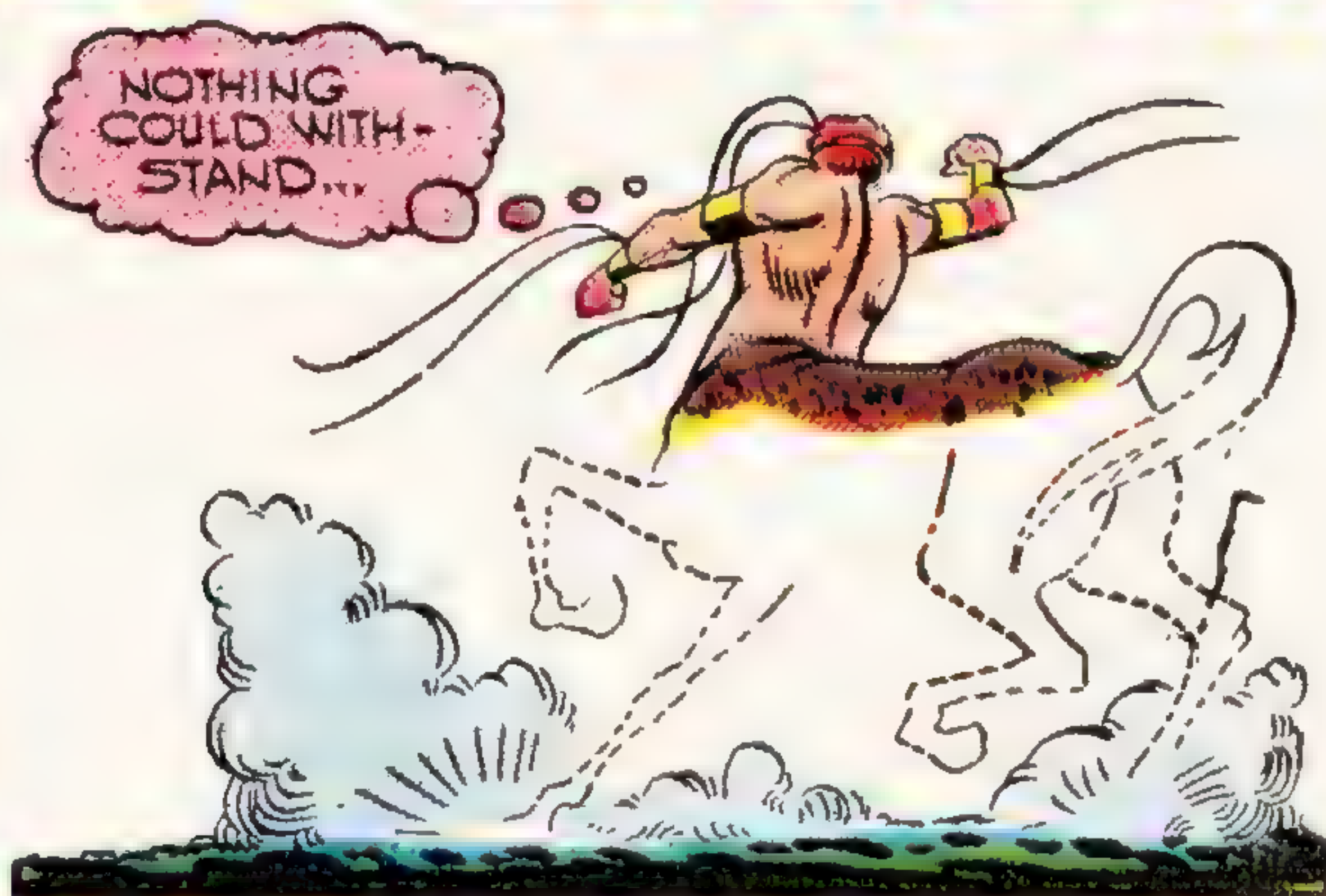
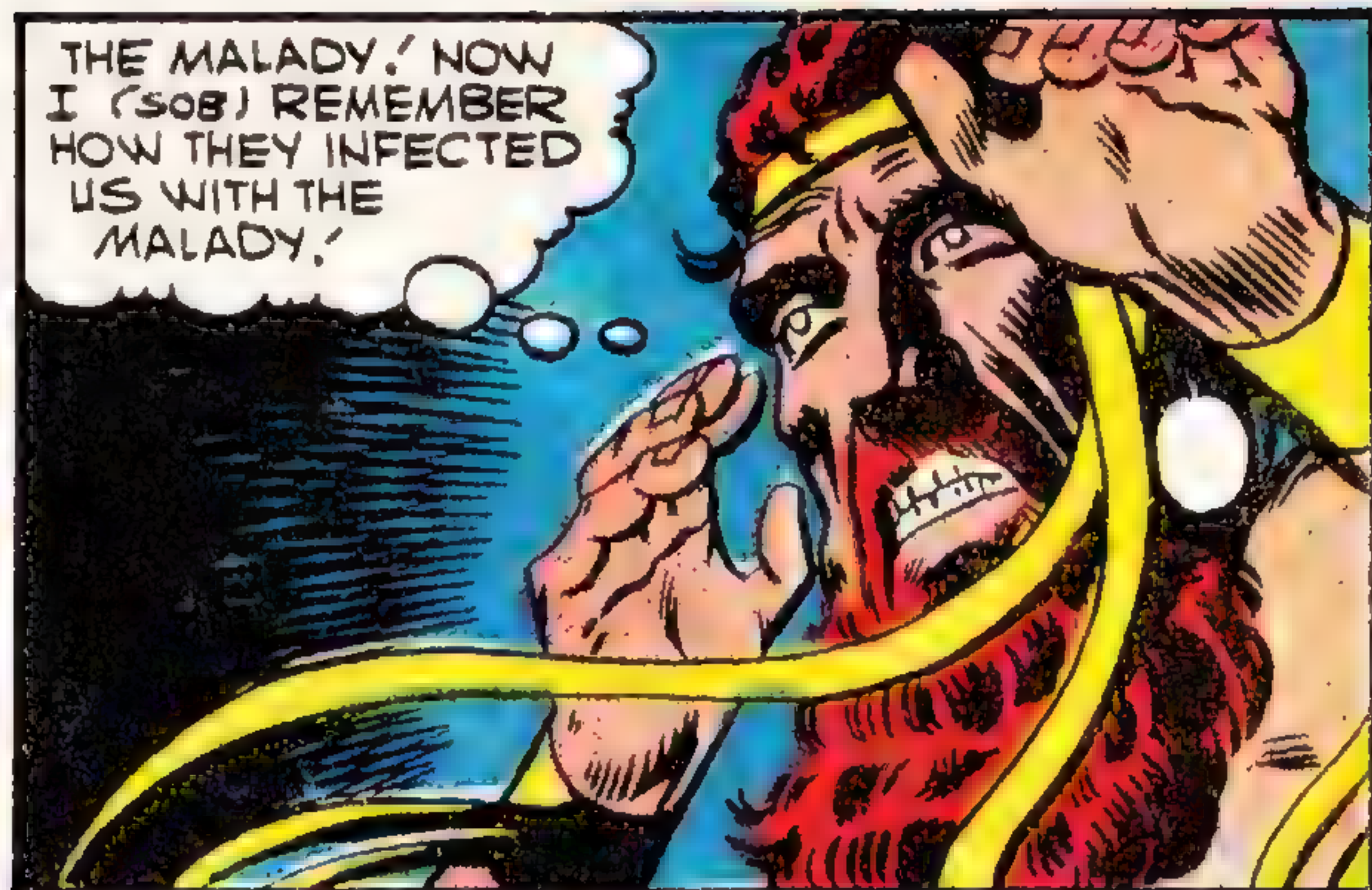
ONE BY ONE, WHENEVER WE MET THE ENEMY, WE VANISHED BY THE MYSTERIOUS MALADY! THOSE THAT REMAINED, GALLOPED IN EVER SHRINKING HERDS! BUT IT WAS FEAR THAT SPURRED US TO SPEED NOW! FEAR OF THE ENEMY AND THE TERRIBLE MALADY THAT WAS HIS WEAPON...





AS THE HOURS INCH BY, THE FURY INSIDE THE CENTAUR KEEPS RISING, LIKE STEAM IN A BOILER ABOUT TO EXPLODE! AND AT LAST...







THE BREAK-
OUT WORKED
FINE...



THEY DON'T EVEN KNOW
I'M OVER THE WALL
YET!



I WON'T HAVE TO SERVE
THAT LIFE TERM
NOW! I'M....

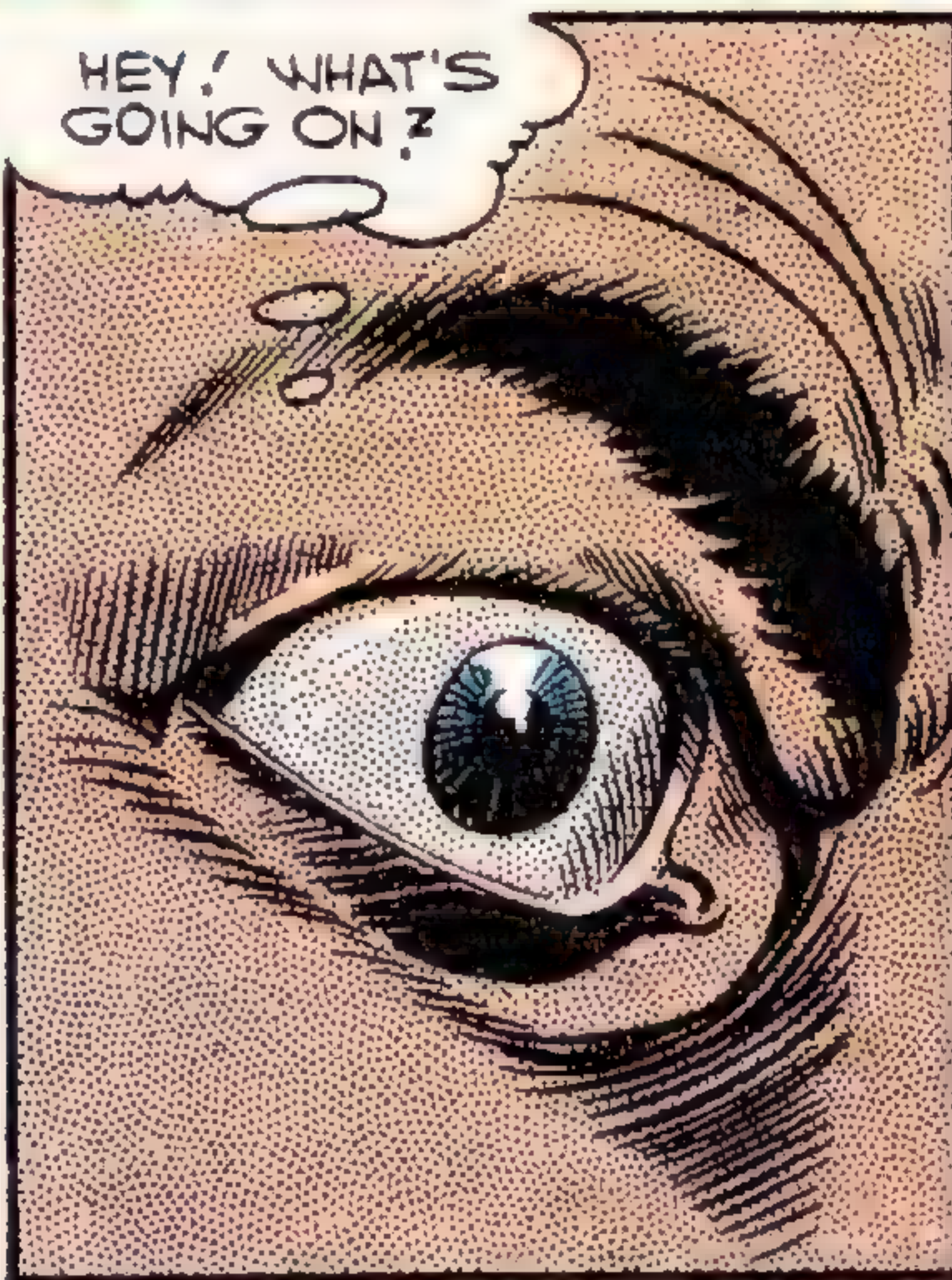


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BUT IT'LL GO HARD ON ME
IF I'M EVER CAUGHT!
HAVE TO PUT A LOT OF
DISTANCE BETWEEN
ME AND THEM!

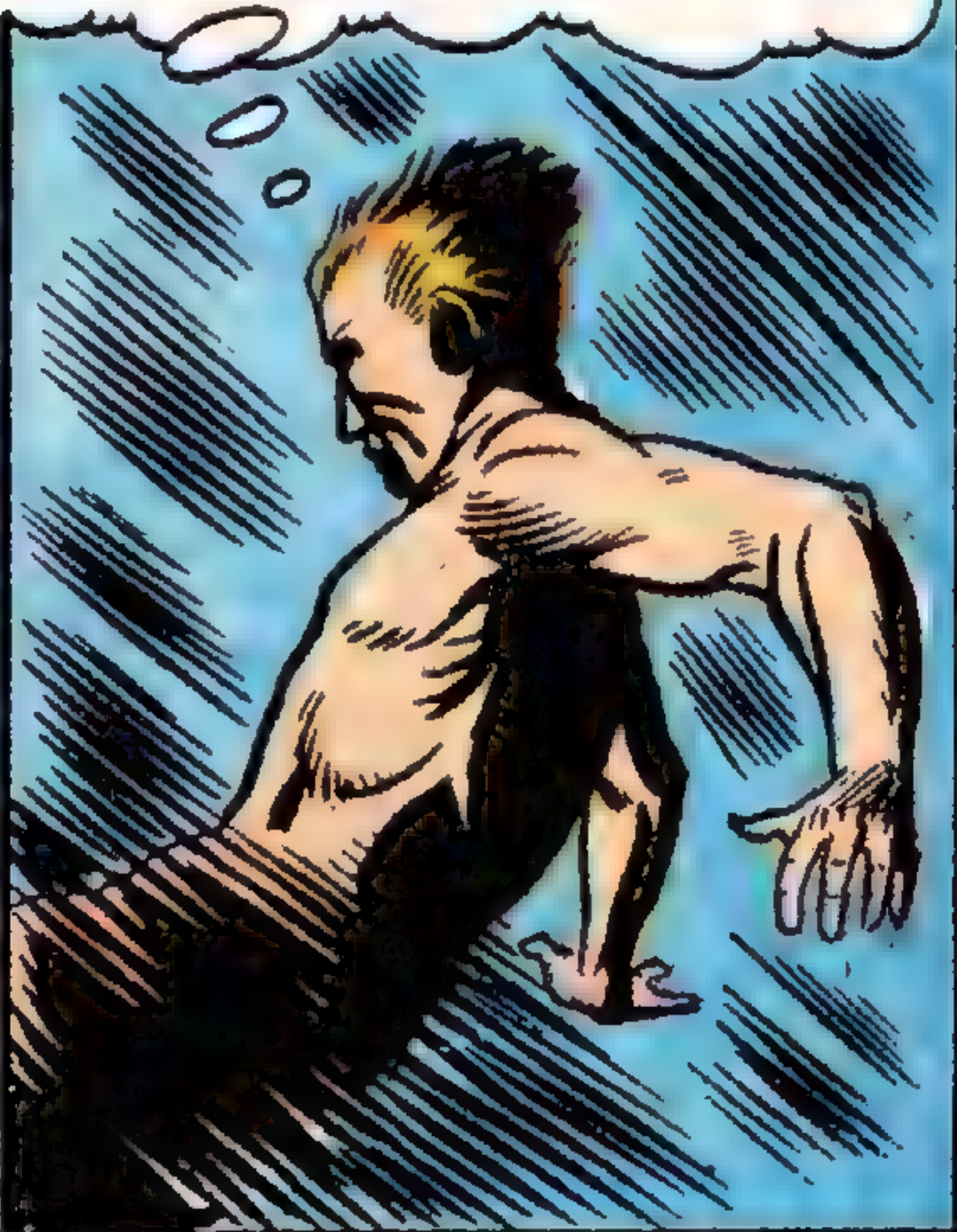


HEY! WHAT'S
GOING ON?



CAN'T KEEP MY BALANCE!
I'M BEING SWEEP AWAY!

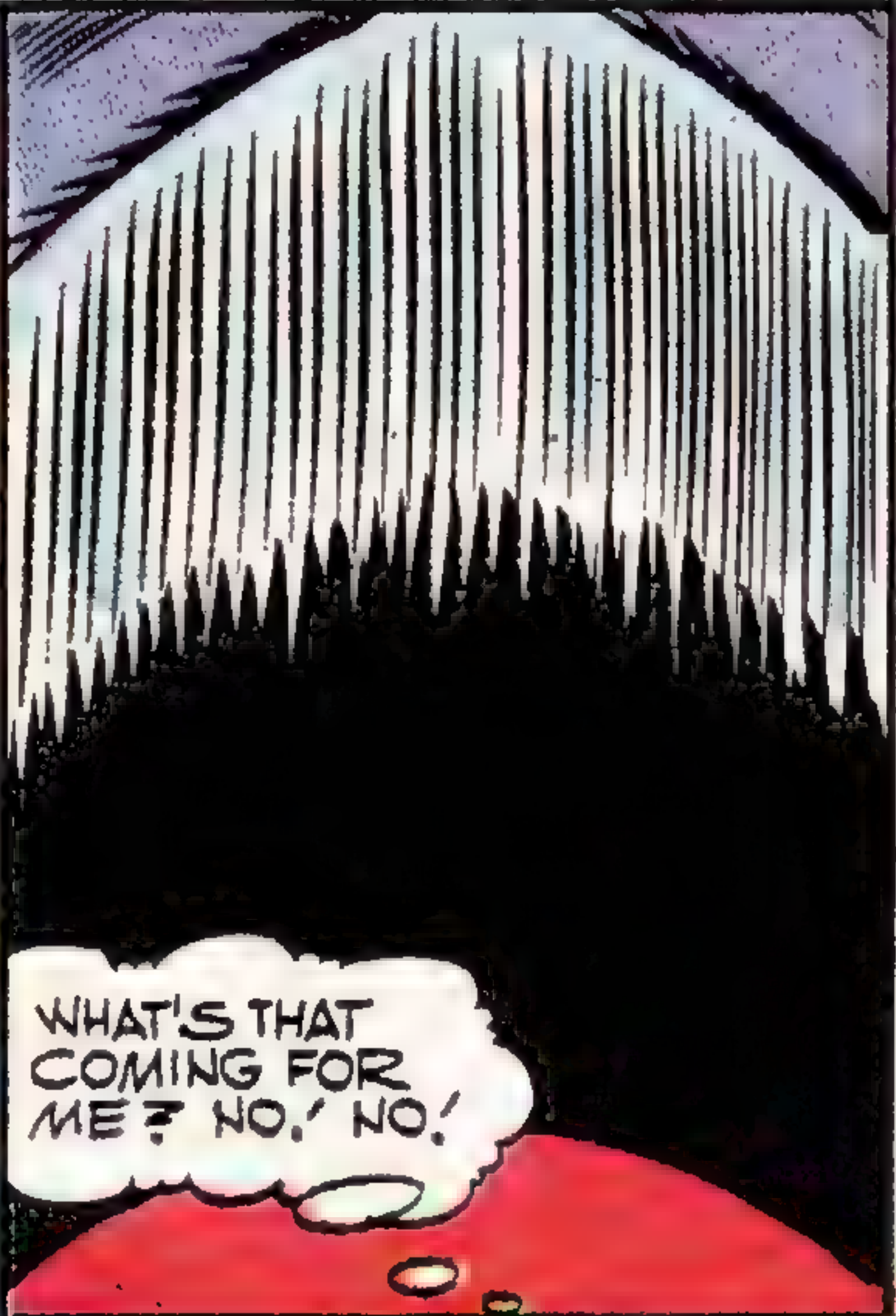
IT'S A STORM! AND IT'S TOO STRONG FOR ME! I CAME TOO FAR! CAN'T FIGHT IT!



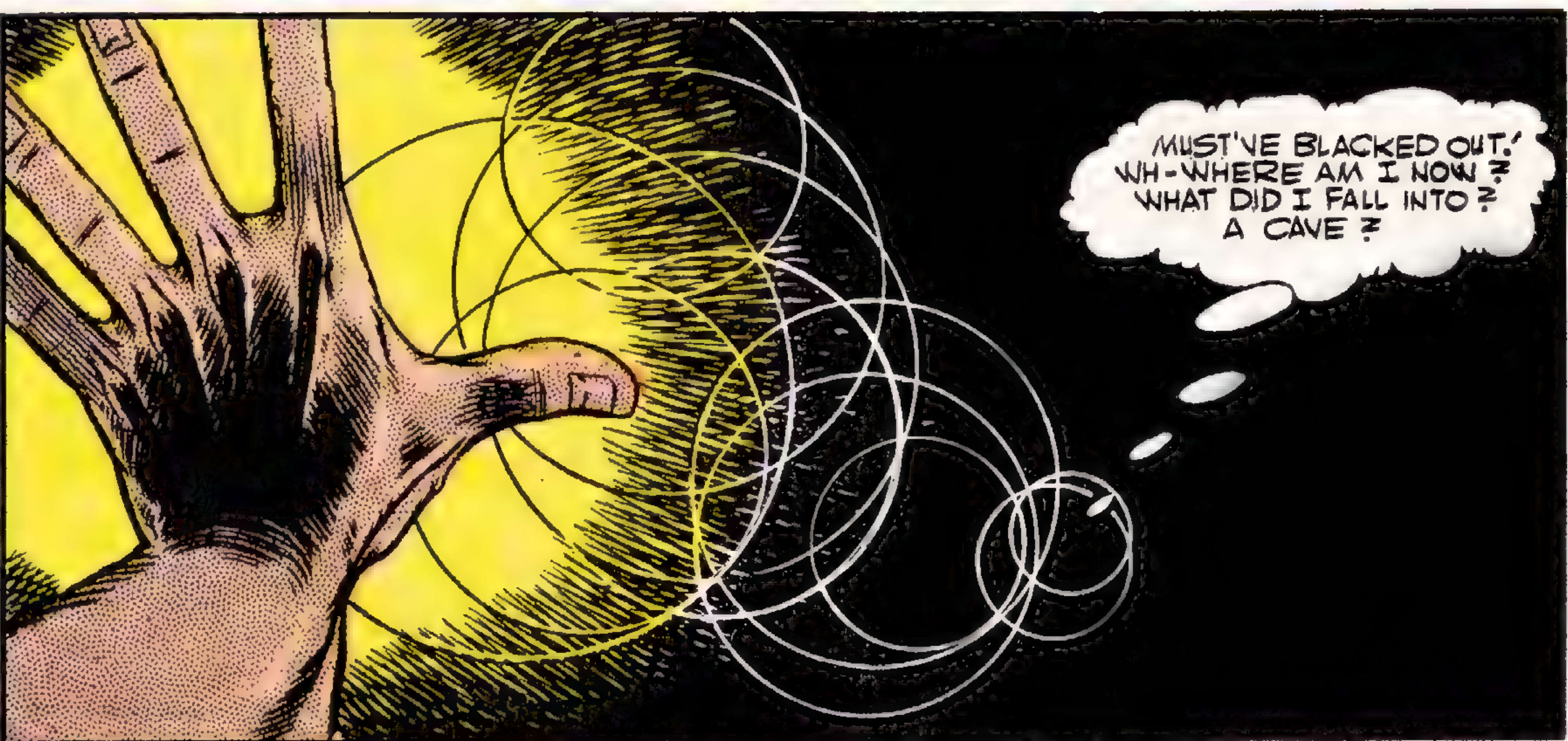
SO WEAK NOW... (GASP) CAN HARDLY MOVE MY ARMS!



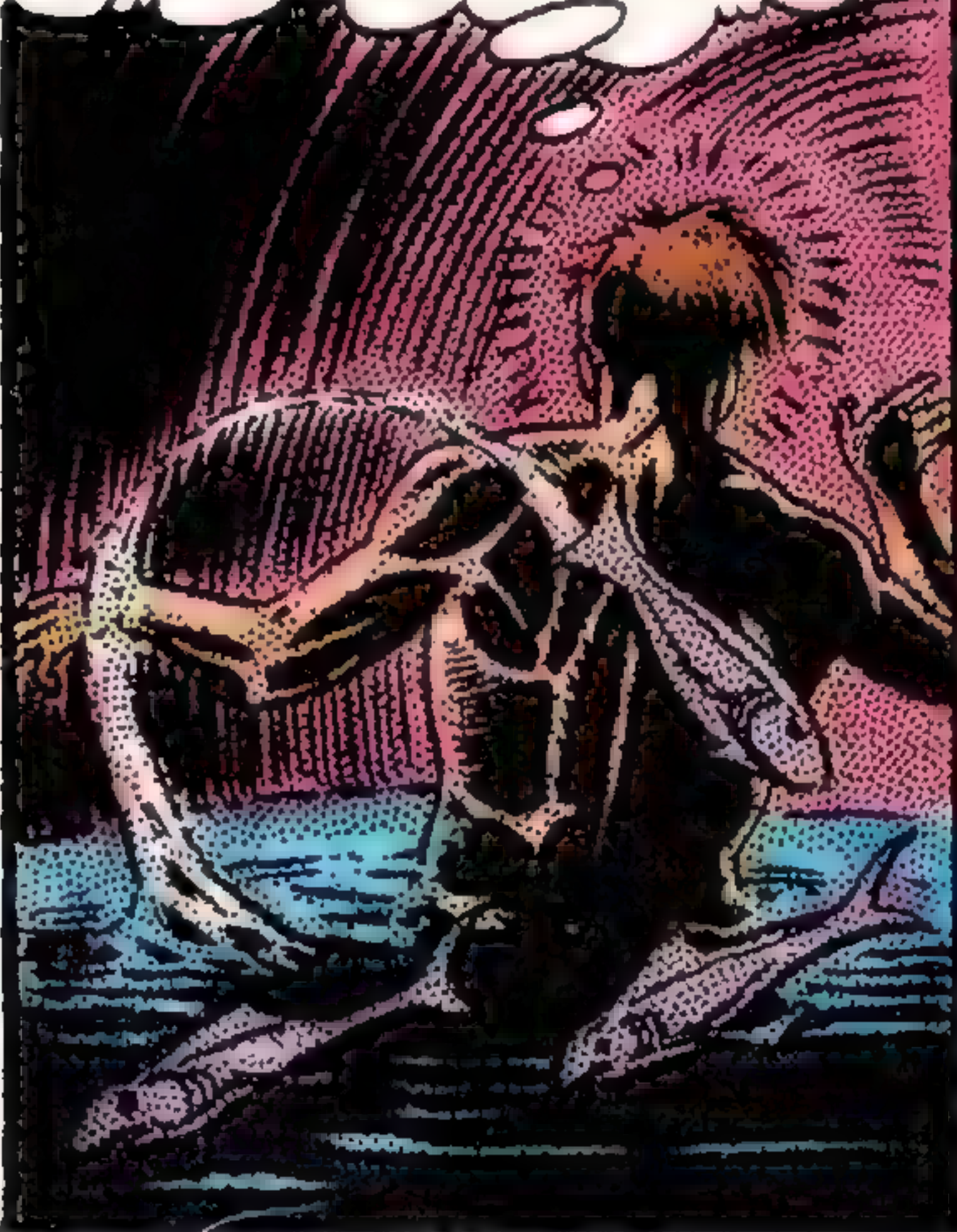
WHAT'S THAT COMING FOR ME? NO! NO!



MUST'VE BLACKED OUT! WH-WHERE AM I NOW? WHAT DID I FALL INTO? A CAVE?



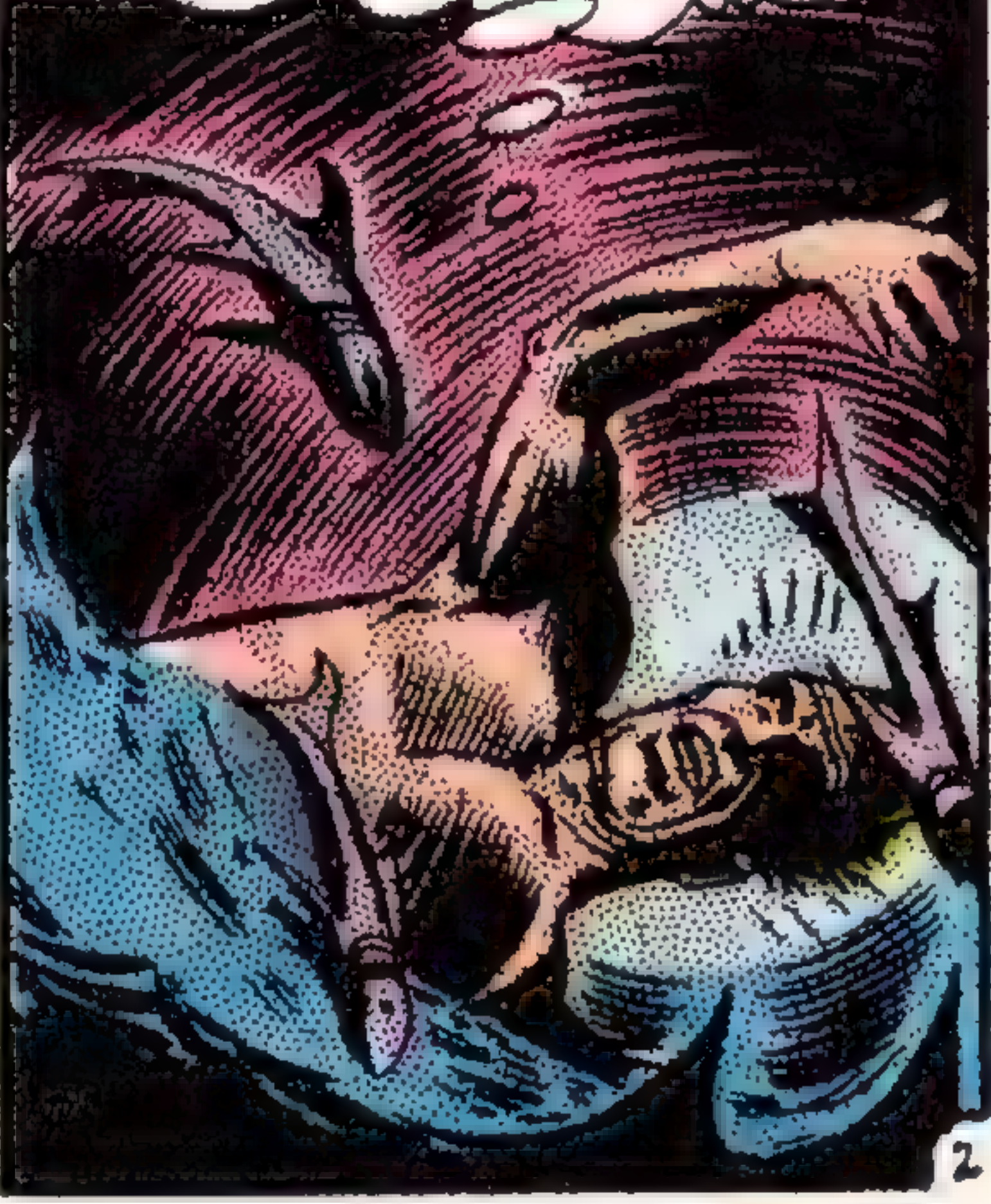
GETTING USED TO THE DARK! CAN SEE A LITTLE BETTER... OH, NO!

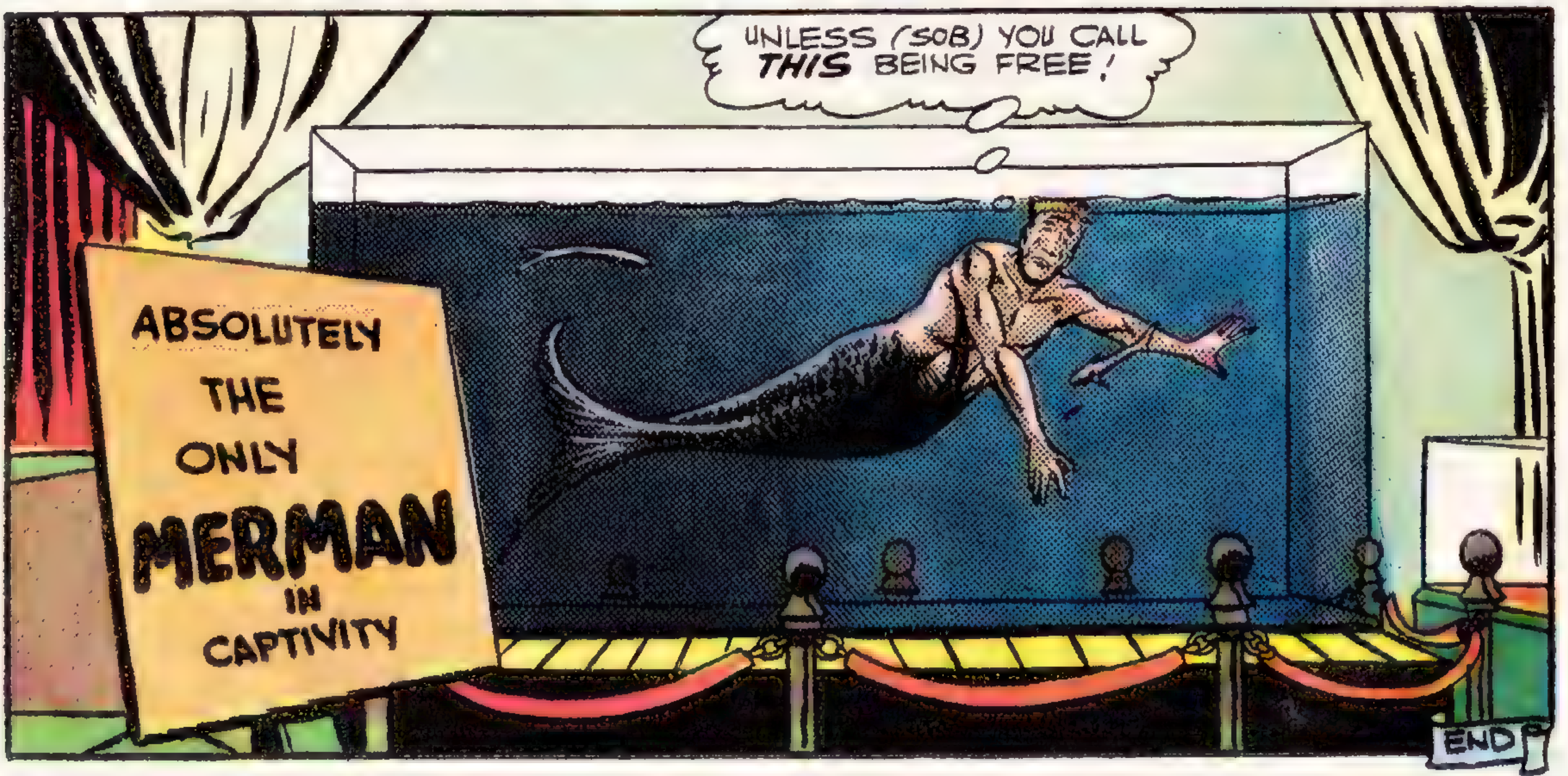
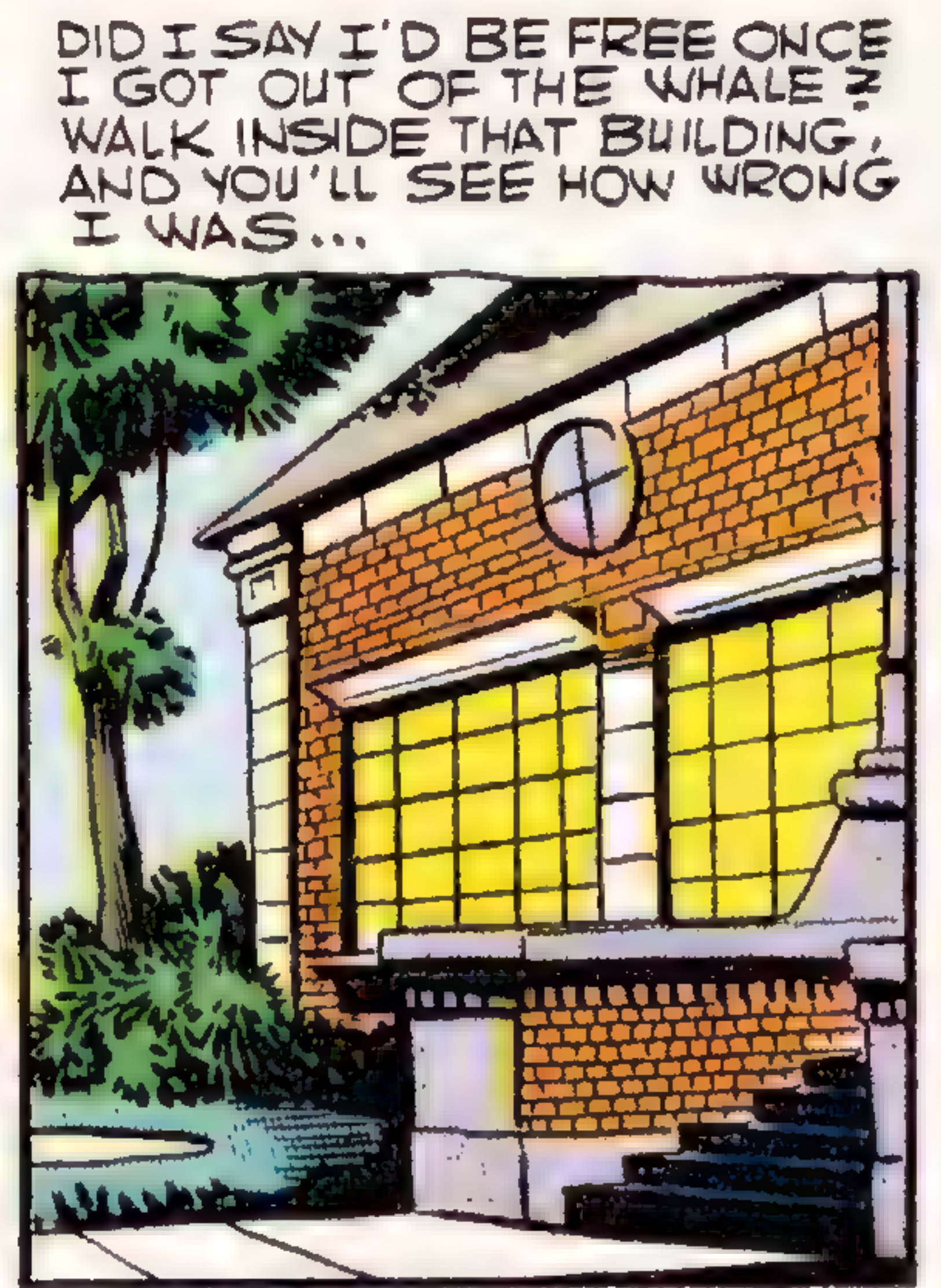
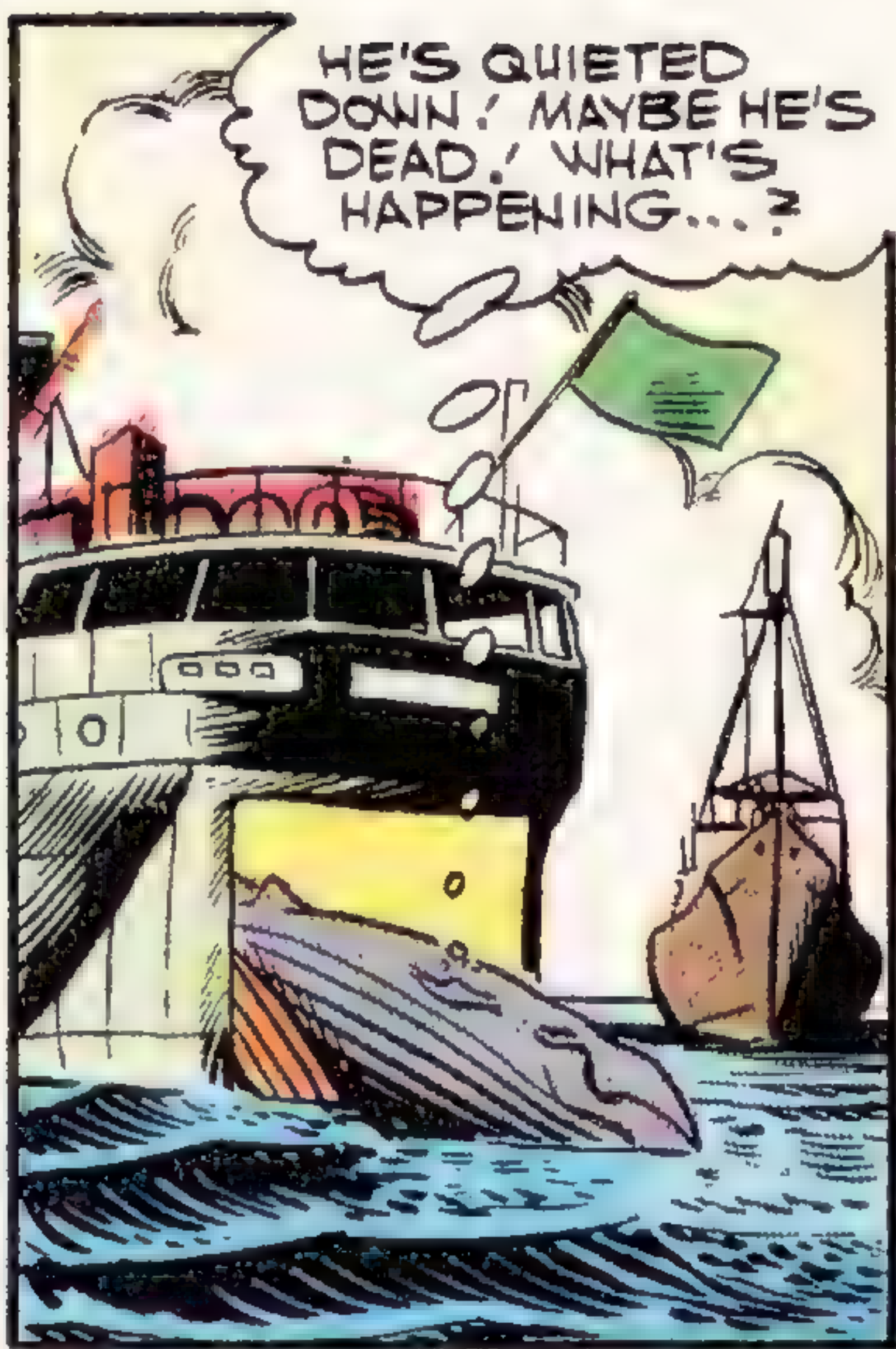


I WAS SWALLOWED ALIVE BY A WHALE! HERE I WAS LOOKING TO BE FREE... AND I (SOB) WIND UP PEN-NED INSIDE A WHALE'S STOMACH!



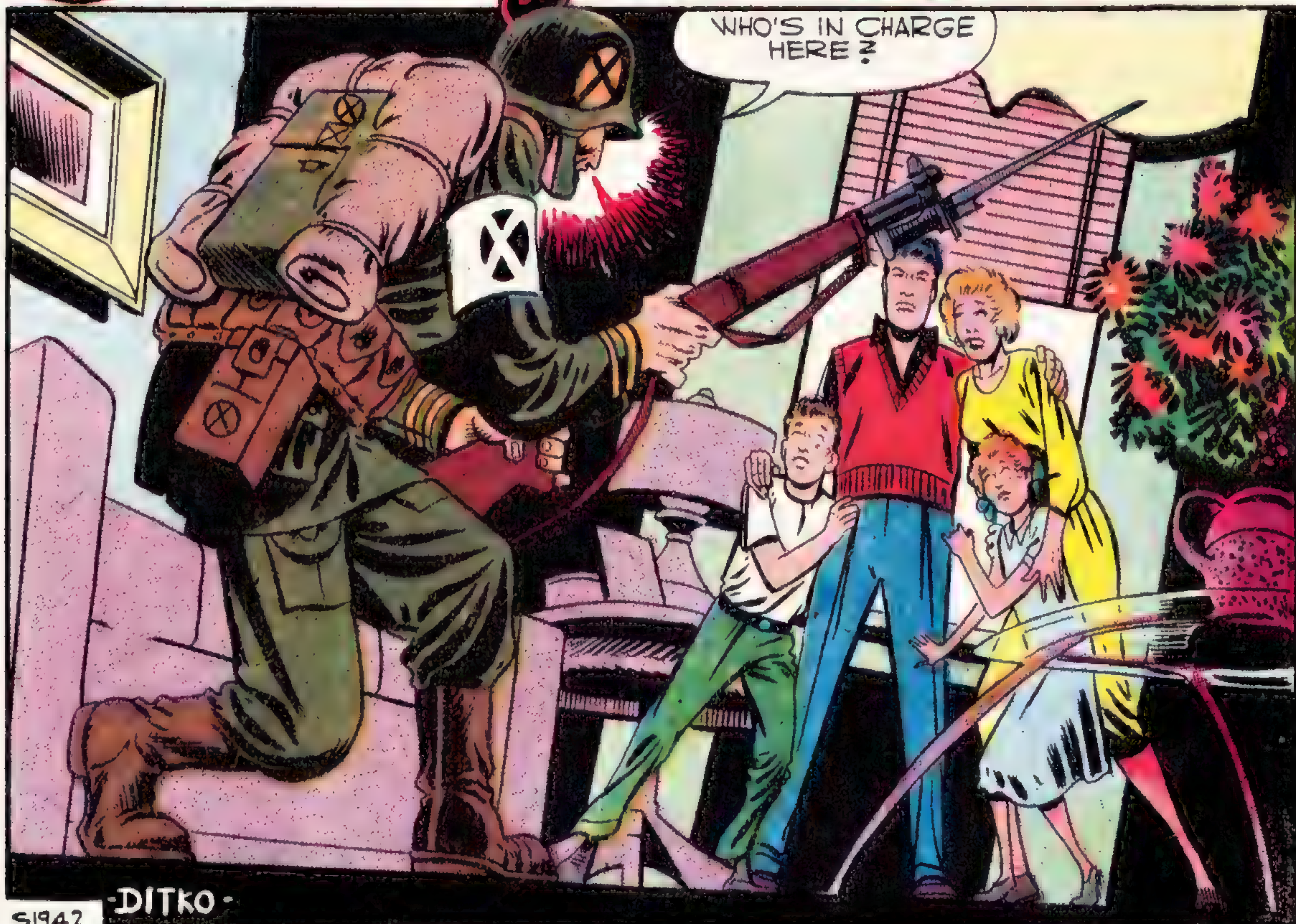
UH-OH -- THE WHALE WAS JUST HIT BY SOMETHING -- NOW IT'S THRASHING AROUND LIKE CRAZY!





THEY WERE A QUIET, CLOSE-KNIT FAMILY, FULL OF LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER, AND ALWAYS SMILING PLACIDLY, BUT THEN ONE DAY, BEFORE THEIR STARTLED EYES, WHERE A SPLIT-SECOND AGO THERE HAD BEEN ONLY EMPTY AIR... THERE WAS NOW A...

Stranger in the House



51942 -DITKO-

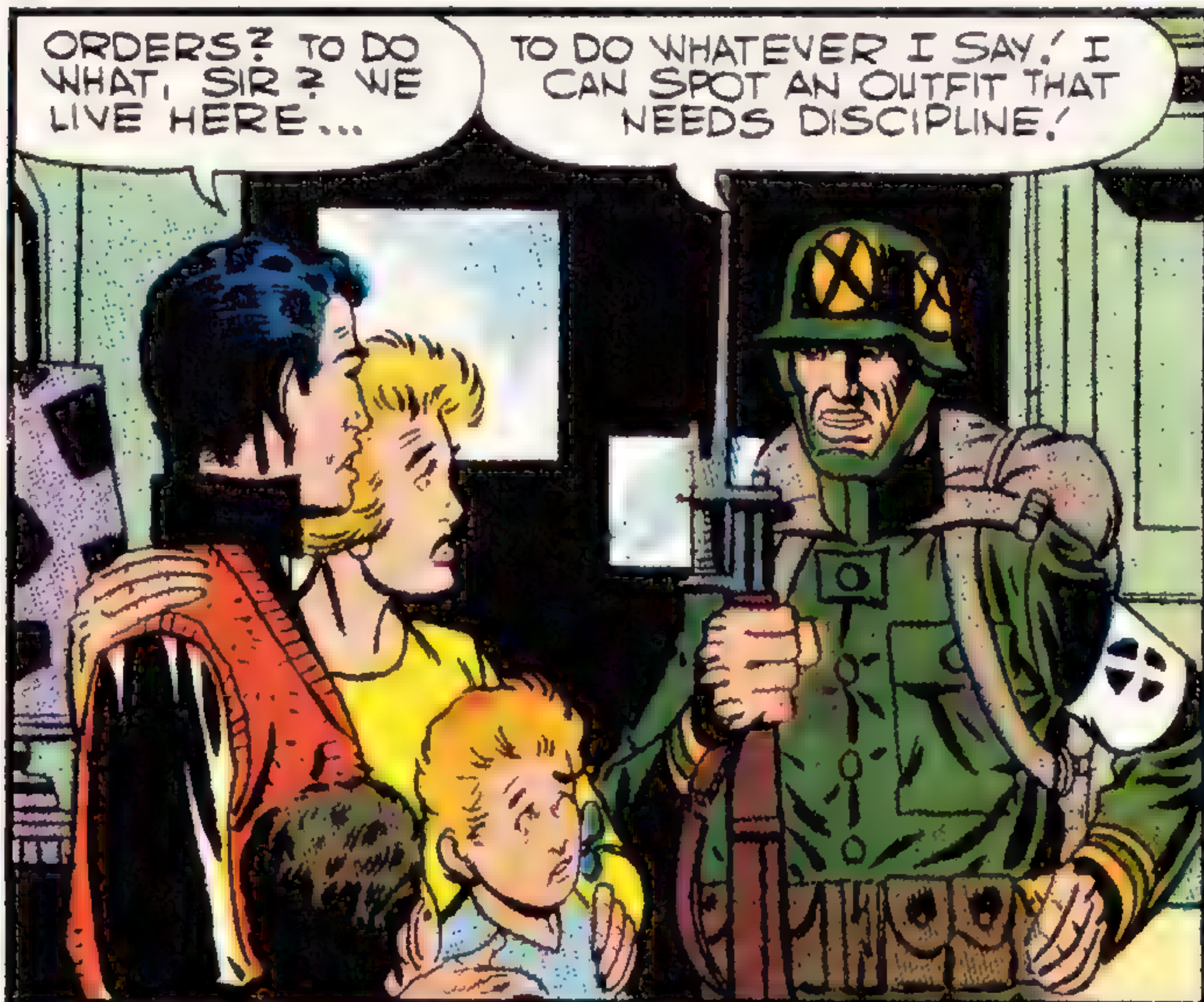


HMPF -- CIVILIANS, EH? WELL, FROM NOW ON YOU'LL ALL TAKE ORDERS FROM ME!



ORDERS? TO DO WHAT, SIR? WE LIVE HERE...

TO DO WHATEVER I SAY! I CAN SPOT AN OUTFIT THAT NEEDS DISCIPLINE!



SO NOW THE FAMILY LEARNED DISCIPLINE! AS THE DAYS PASSED, THEY KEPT SMILING... BUT THEIR SMILES WERE STRAINED NOW -- AND THEIR EYES WERE TROUBLED...



YOU CALL THIS FLOOR CLEAN? SCRUB IT AGAIN!

B-BUT I'M SO TIRED, SIR...

THAT WAS A DIRECT ORDER! SCRUB IT AGAIN, I SAID!



PUT THE BRUSH DOWN, DEAR!

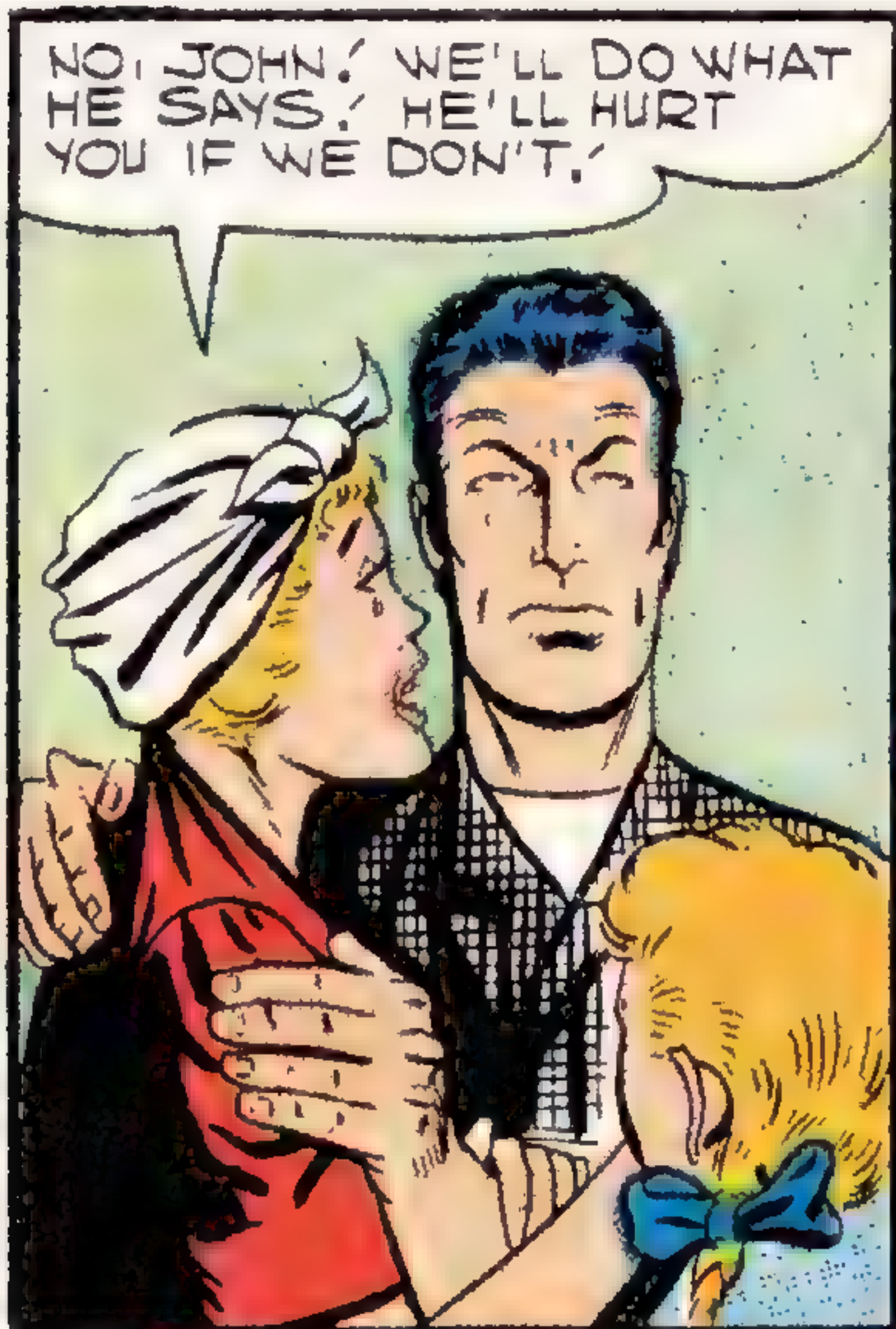
WHAT WAS THAT YOU SAID TO HER?



YOU'VE ISSUED YOUR LAST ORDER IN THIS HOUSE! I'M INSTRUCTING MY FAMILY NOT TO LISTEN TO YOU ANY MORE!

YOU ARE...





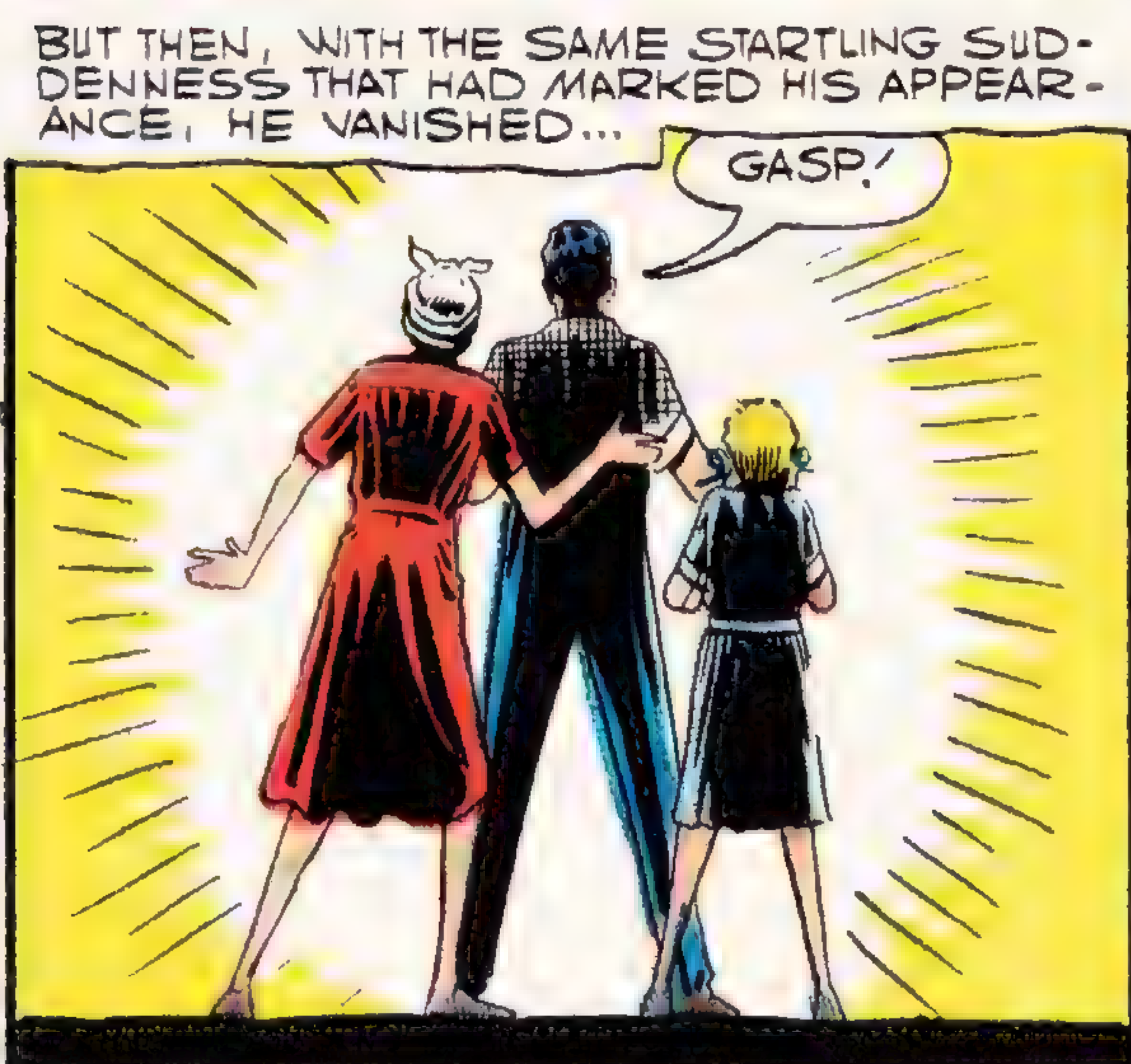
NO, JOHN! WE'LL DO WHAT HE SAYS! HE'LL HURT YOU IF WE DON'T!



I'VE NEVER SAID NO TO YOU BEFORE, MARTHA... BUT THIS TIME I HAVE TO! WE WERE HAPPY UNTIL HE CAME... I HAVE TO PUT A STOP TO WHAT HE'S BEEN DOING TO US!

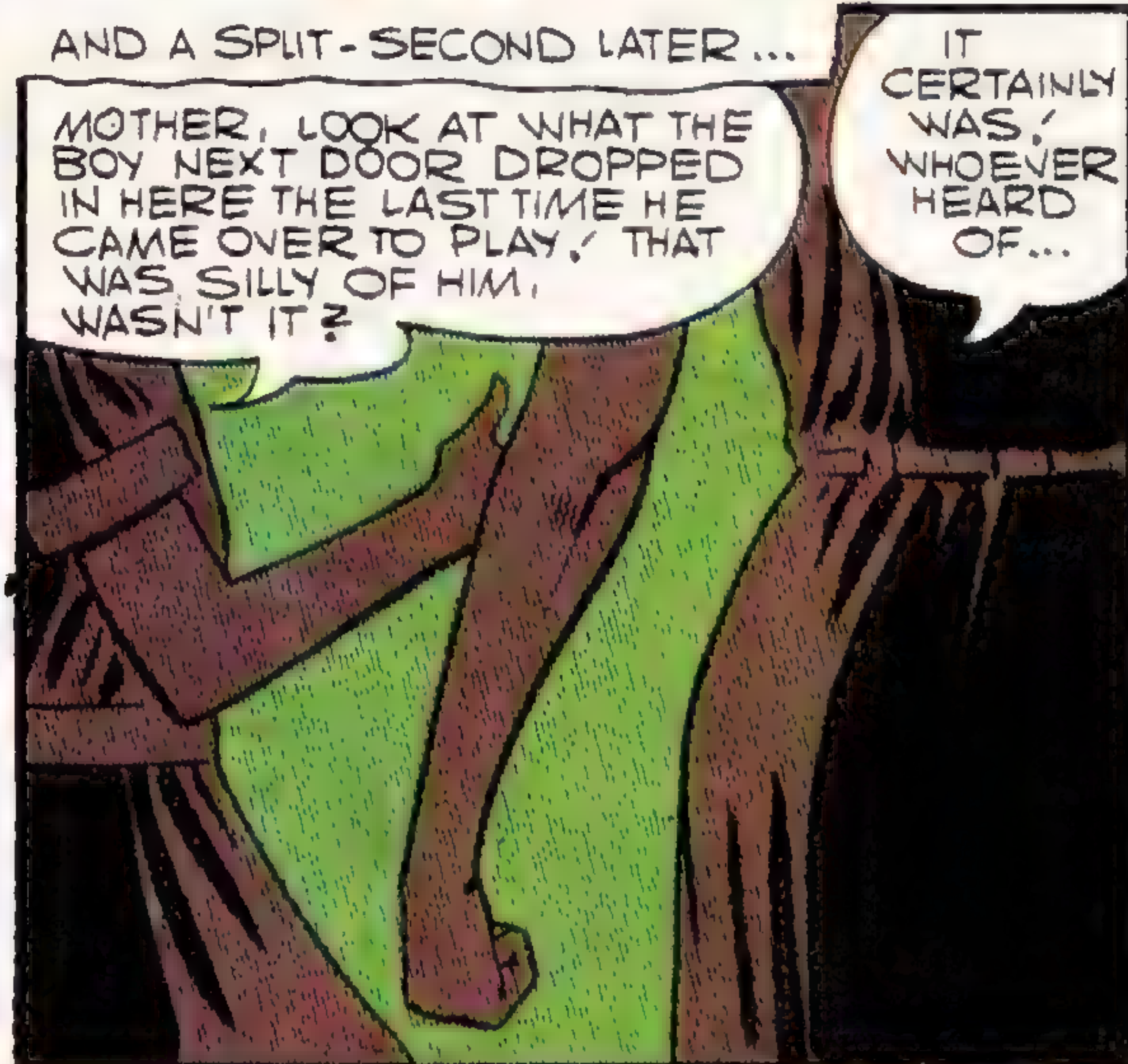


THE ONLY THING THAT WILL STOP IS YOUR INSUBORDINATION! AND IT'LL STOP RIGHT NOW!



BUT THEN, WITH THE SAME STARTLING SUD- DENNESS THAT HAD MARKED HIS APPEAR- ANCE, HE VANISHED...

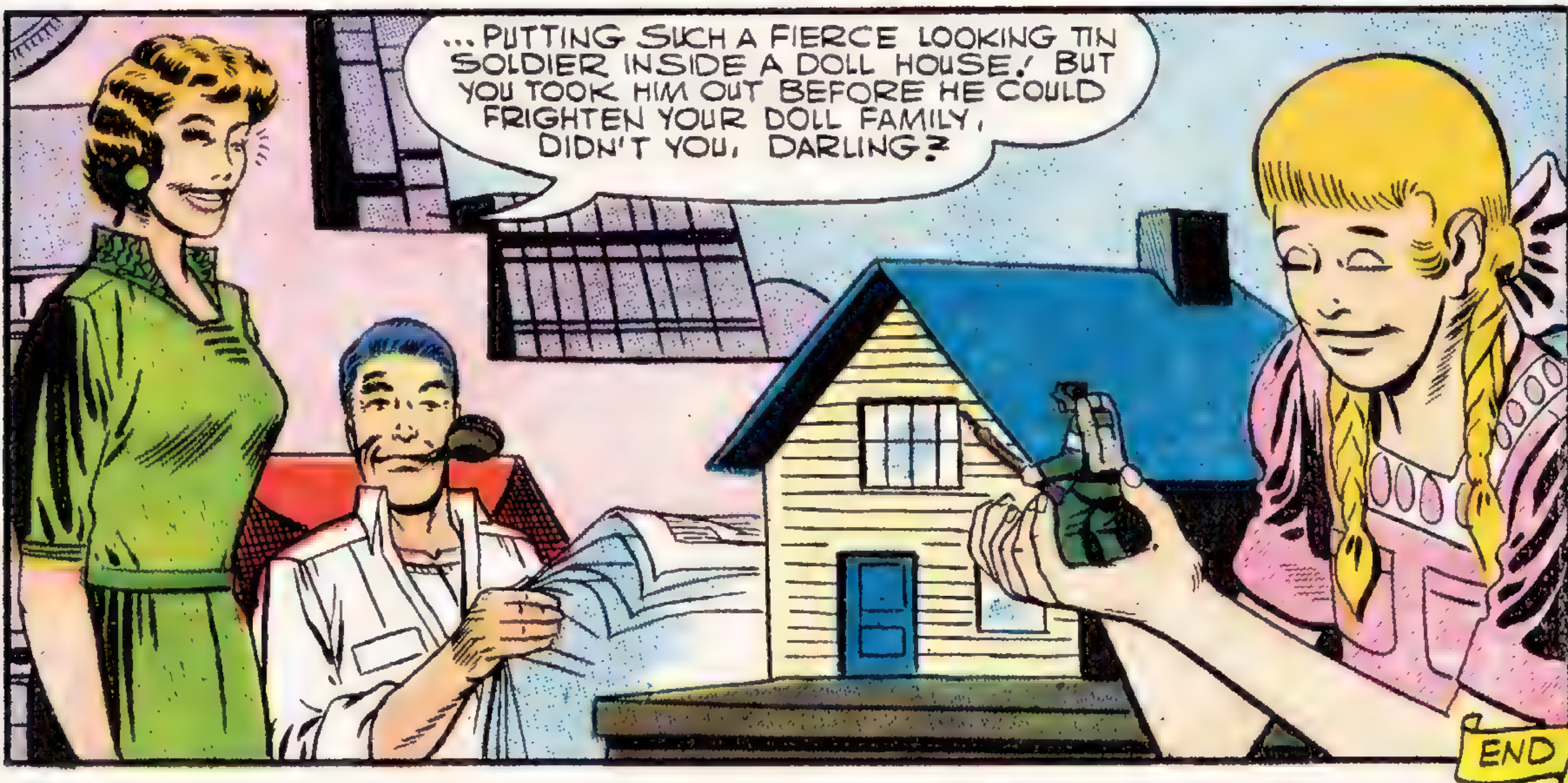
GASP!



AND A SPLIT-SECOND LATER...

MOTHER, LOOK AT WHAT THE BOY NEXT DOOR DROPPED IN HERE THE LAST TIME HE CAME OVER TO PLAY! THAT WAS SILLY OF HIM, WASN'T IT?

IT CERTAINLY WAS! WHOEVER HEARD OF...



...PUTTING SUCH A FIERCE LOOKING TIN SOLDIER INSIDE A DOLL HOUSE! BUT YOU TOOK HIM OUT BEFORE HE COULD FRIGHTEN YOUR DOLL FAMILY, DIDN'T YOU, DARLING?

END!

ALL THOSE

EYES

TH- THEY KEEP STARING AT ME!
HOW DID THEY EVER FIND ME
OUT? H-HOW (SOB) DID
THEY FOLLOW ME HERE?

NOT JUST ONE, BUT ALL OF
THEM! THEY'VE ALL COME
AFTER ME! AND NOW
THEY KEEP STARING...
(SOB) STARING...



HE WAS A SPY, AND WHAT SPIES
FEAR MOST IS BEING FOUND
OUT AND CAUGHT. HE HAD LIVED
THROUGH THIS TERRIBLE MO-
MENT AGAIN AND AGAIN IN
NIGHTMARES. IN ONE FEAR-
SOME DREAM AFTER ANOTHER
HE HAD QUAILED BEFORE THE
PITILESS LOATHING IN HIS CAP-
TOR'S EYES. BUT THIS WAS
NO DREAM-- THESE EYES
WERE REAL...



NOW, HUDDLED TREMBLINGLY IN THE SHADOWS, HE KNEW HOW WRONG HE HAD BEEN...



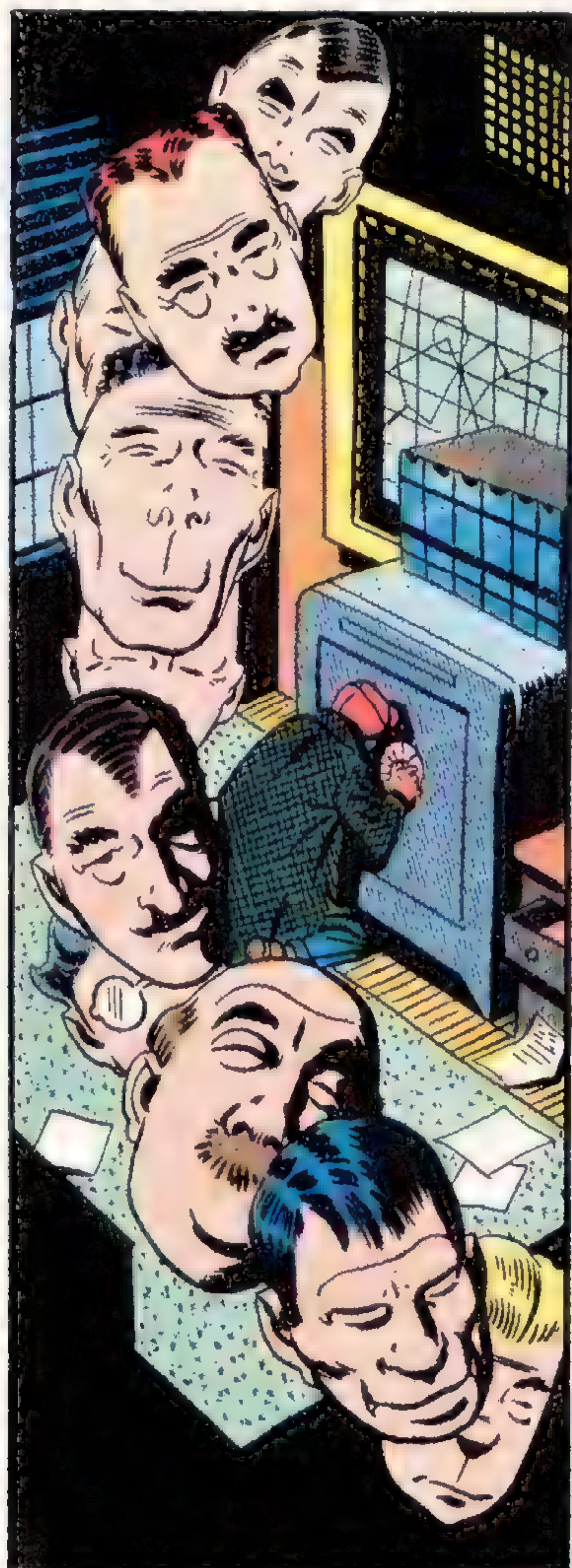
...WHEN HE HAD BOASTED THAT BECAUSE OF HIS MASKS, HE WOULD NEVER BE FOUND OUT...

I AM A MAN OF A THOUSAND FACES! NOBODY WILL EVER BE ABLE TO POINT AN ACCUSING FINGER AT ME!

ALWAYS WHEN SETTING OUT TO STEAL A SECRET FOR HIS SPYMASTER, HE HAD DONNED A NEW MASK...

AND HOW HE HAD ALWAYS LAUGHED, UPON READING WITNESSES' DESCRIPTIONS IN THE NEWSPAPERS...

THE SPYMASTER HAD BEEN VERY PLEASED WITH HIS WORK...



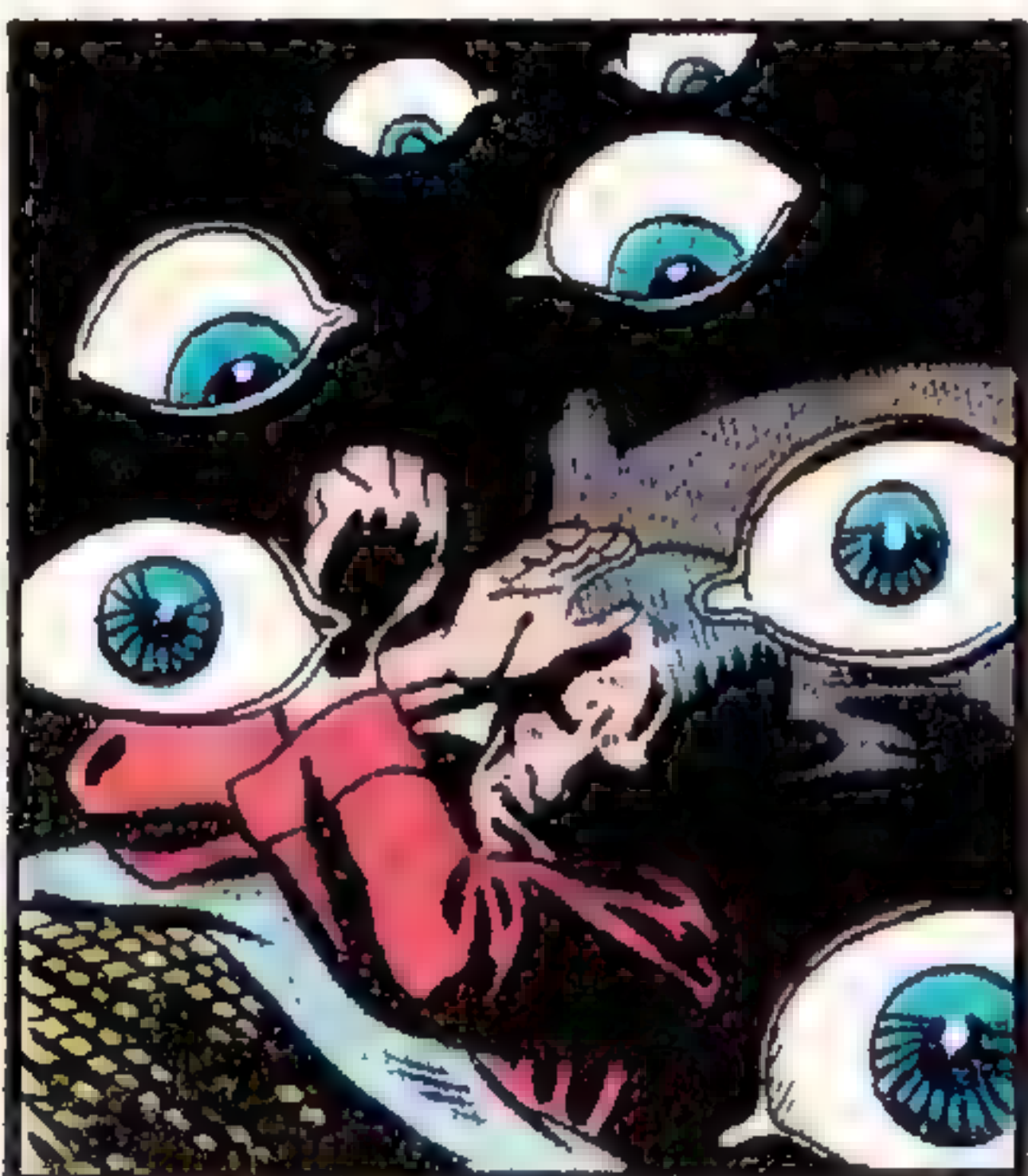
THE WATCHMAN DESCRIBED THE MAN AS BALD AND HAVING A SCAR ON HIS RIGHT CHEEK.



YOU SERVE US WELL! NOT EVEN I KNOW WHAT YOU REALLY LOOK LIKE!



BUT DESPITE ALL HIS SUCCESS... WHAT SPIES FEAR MOST IS BEING FOUND OUT, AND OVER AND OVER AGAIN HE HAD DREAMED THOSE TERRIBLE DREAMS -- FILLED WITH THE STARING EYES...



TONIGHT HE HAD BEEN ON HIS MOST IMPORTANT ASSIGNMENT TO DATE! MONTHS OF PREPARATION HAD OPENED MANY DOORS FOR HIM! BUT JUST WHEN HIS HAND HAD GRASPED THE PORTFOLIO...

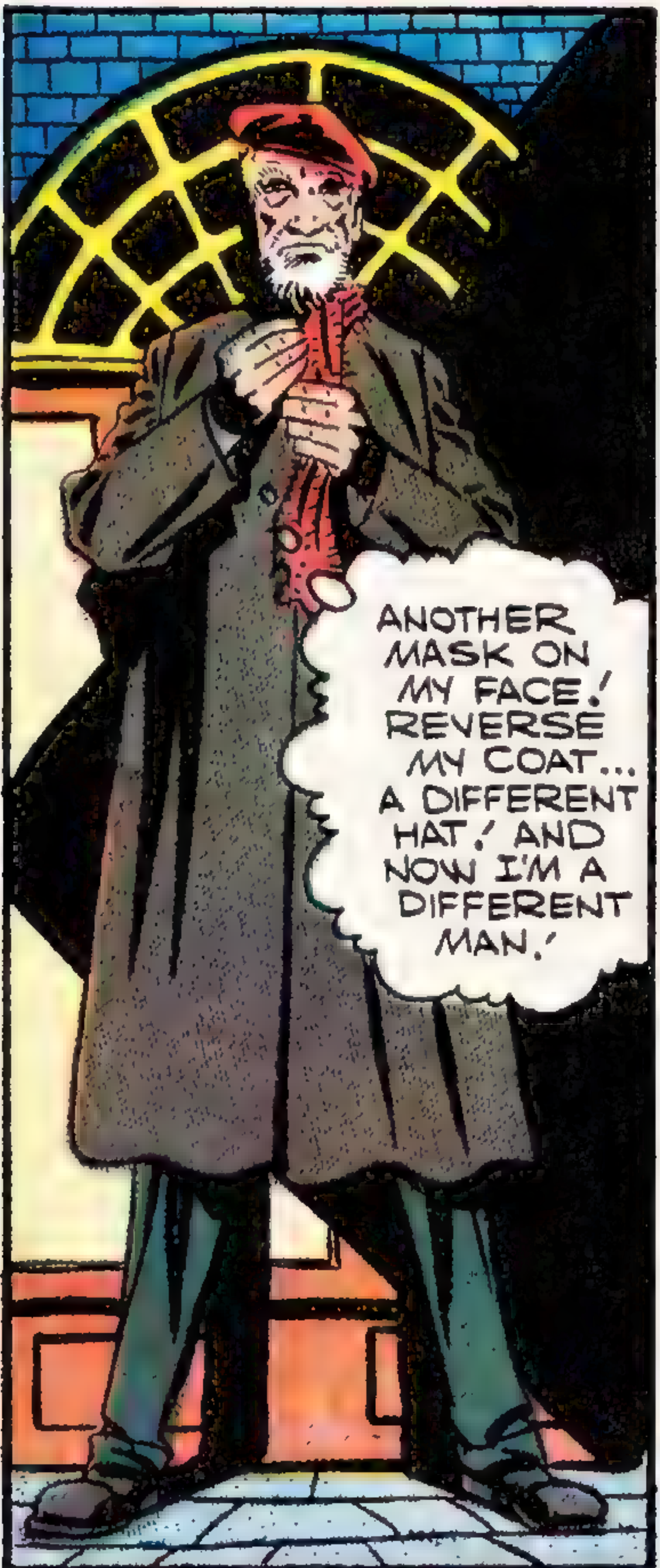


HEY?!

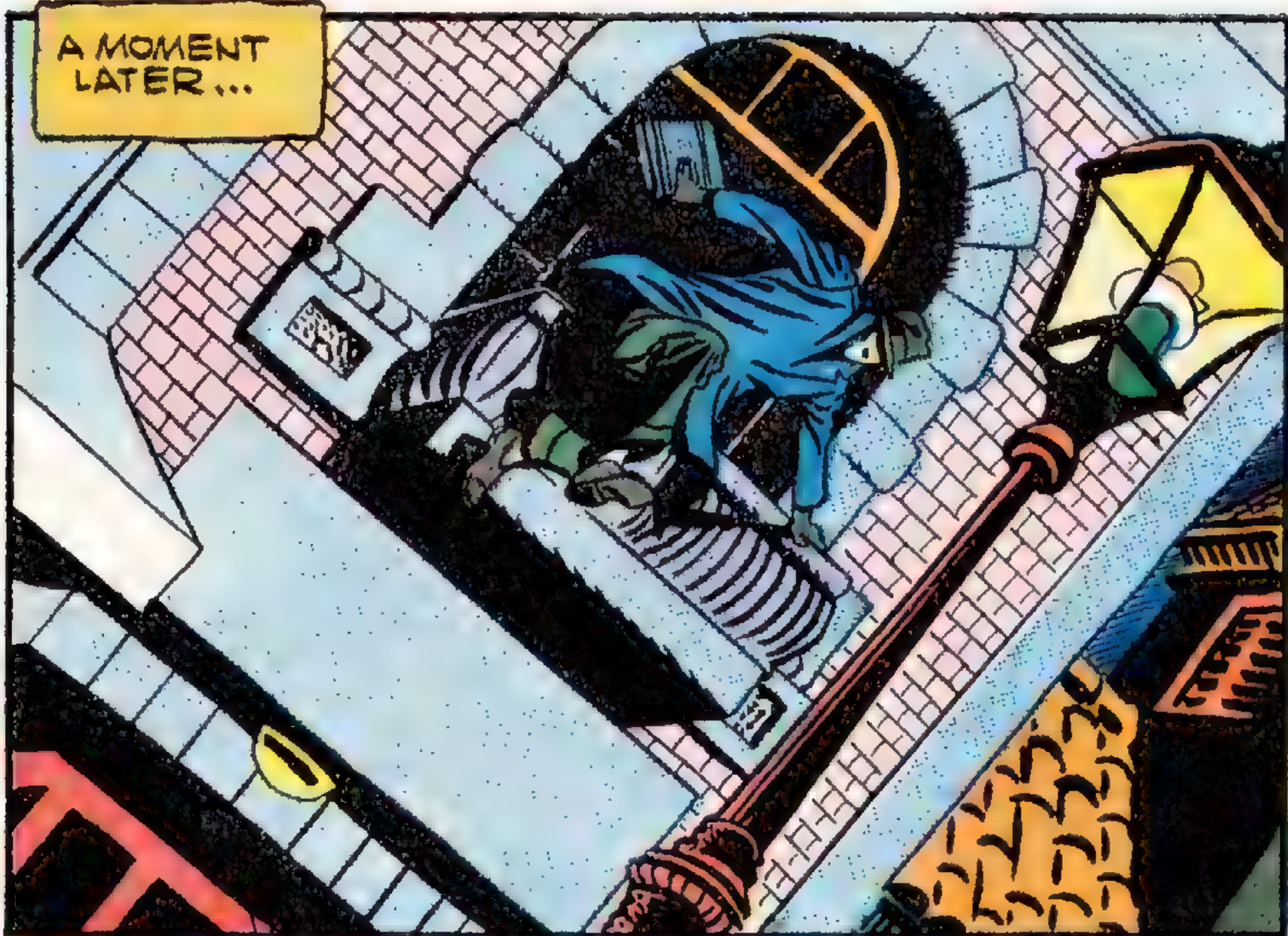
THE SUDDENNESS OF HIS BLOW
HAD TAKEN HIS ASSAILANT
BY SURPRISE, BUT HE
MADE CERTAIN THAT HIS FACE
COULD BE SEEN DURING THE
SCUFFLE...



AND THEN IN THE SHADOWS
BELOW...



A MOMENT
LATER...



ANYTHING
WRONG?

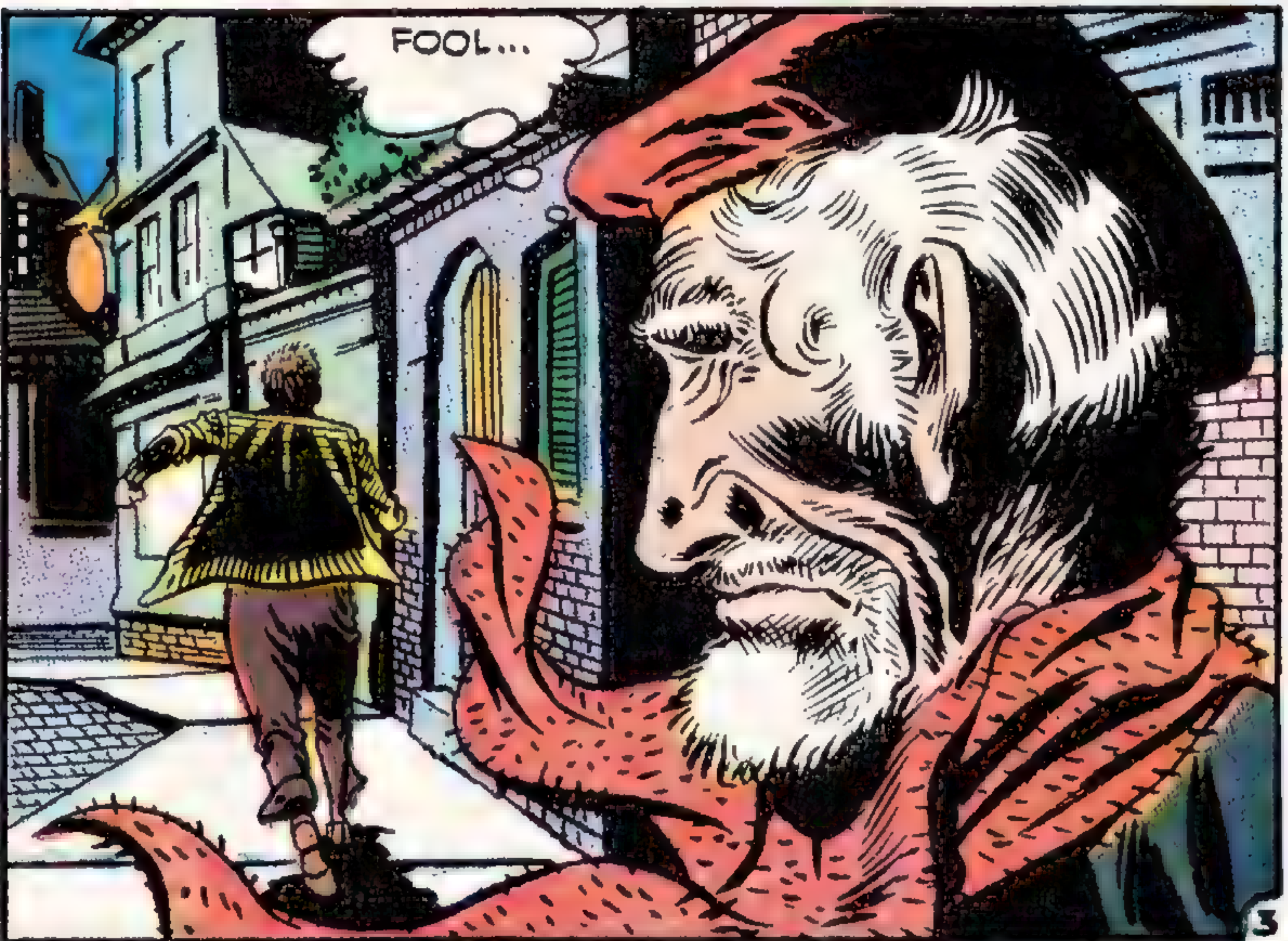
DID YOU SEE
SOMEBODY
JUST DROP
FROM THAT
WINDOW?



YES! HE RAN
DOWN THE
STREET!



FOOL...



BUT THEN, LATER...

THEY'VE WORKED FASTER THAN I THOUGHT. THEY'VE THROWN UP A CORDON AROUND THE AREA. THEY ARE SEARCHING EVERYBODY... AND I STILL HAVE THE PORTFOLIO ON MY PERSON.



THAT WALL! IF I COULD CLIMB THAT WALL... I COULD BURY THE PORTFOLIO BEHIND IT! I COULD HIDE!

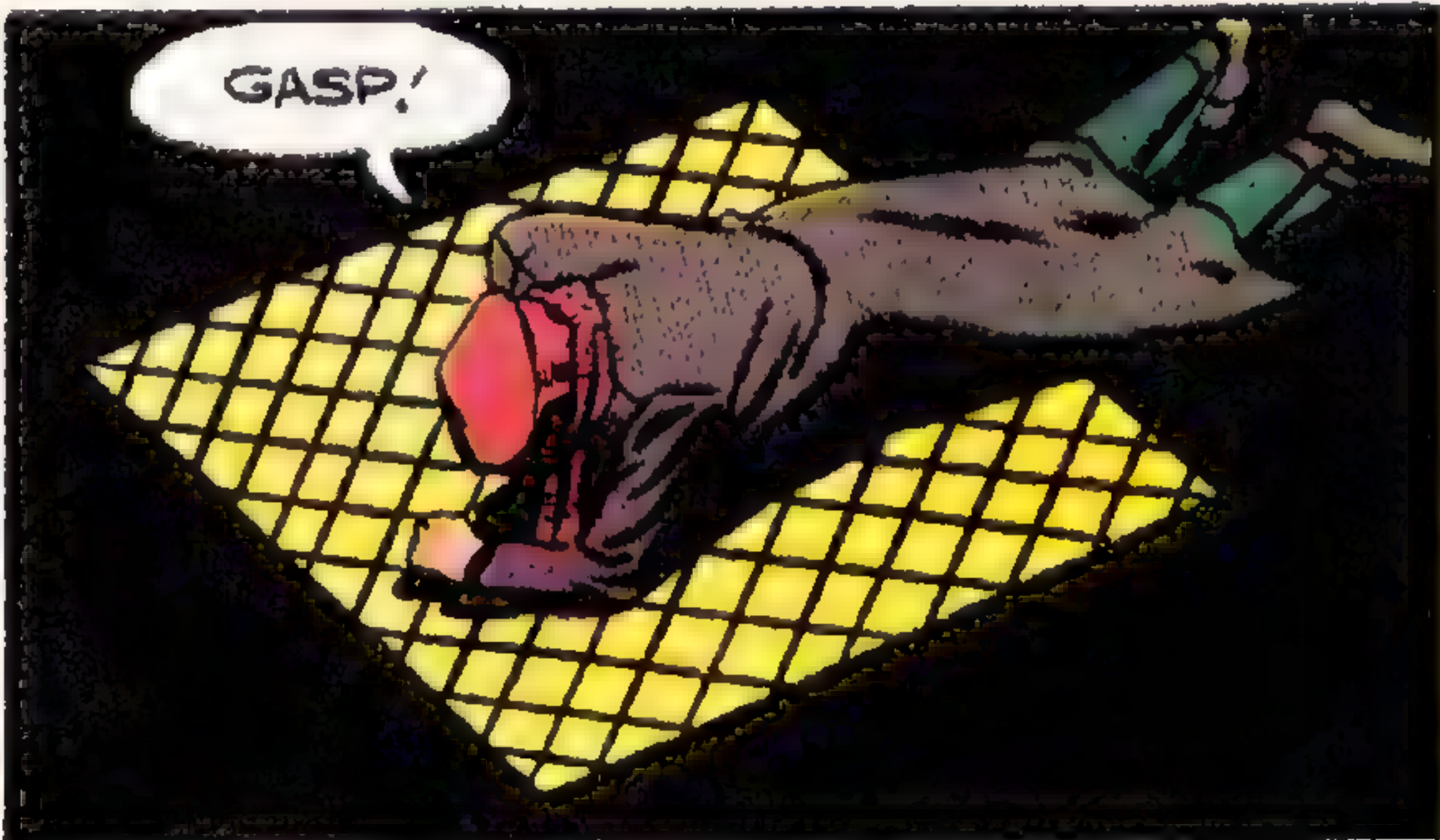


UNNNH!

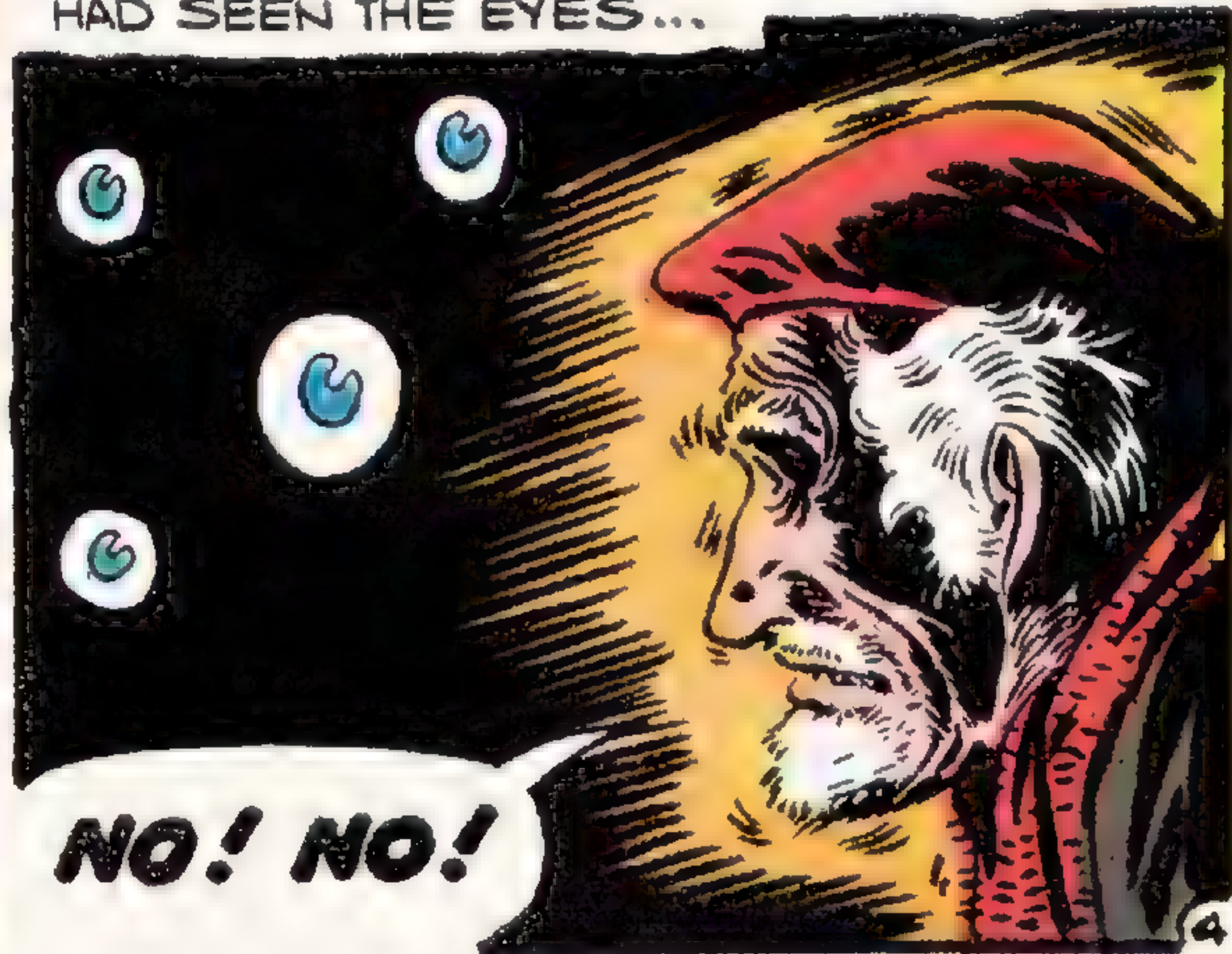
SO TIRED... CAN HARDLY MOVE. THAT HOUSE -- MUST TRY TO DRAG MYSELF INSIDE... AND REST FOR A WHILE...



GASP!



HE HAD STRETCHED OUT INSIDE, GRATEFUL FOR THE DARKNESS INSIDE! HOW LONG HE THEN SLEPT, HE WAS NEVER TO KNOW! BUT SUDDENLY, A FAINT MOONBEAM HAD SHONE THROUGH THE WINDOW! AND HE HAD SEEN THE EYES...

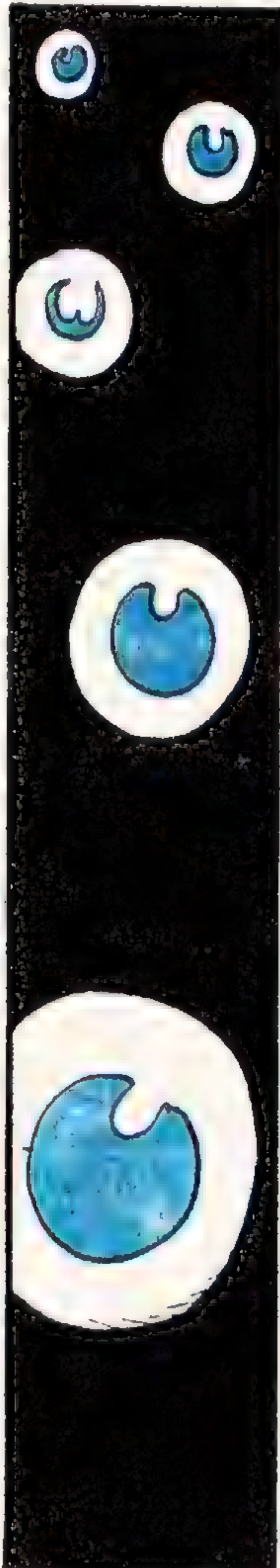


NO! NO!

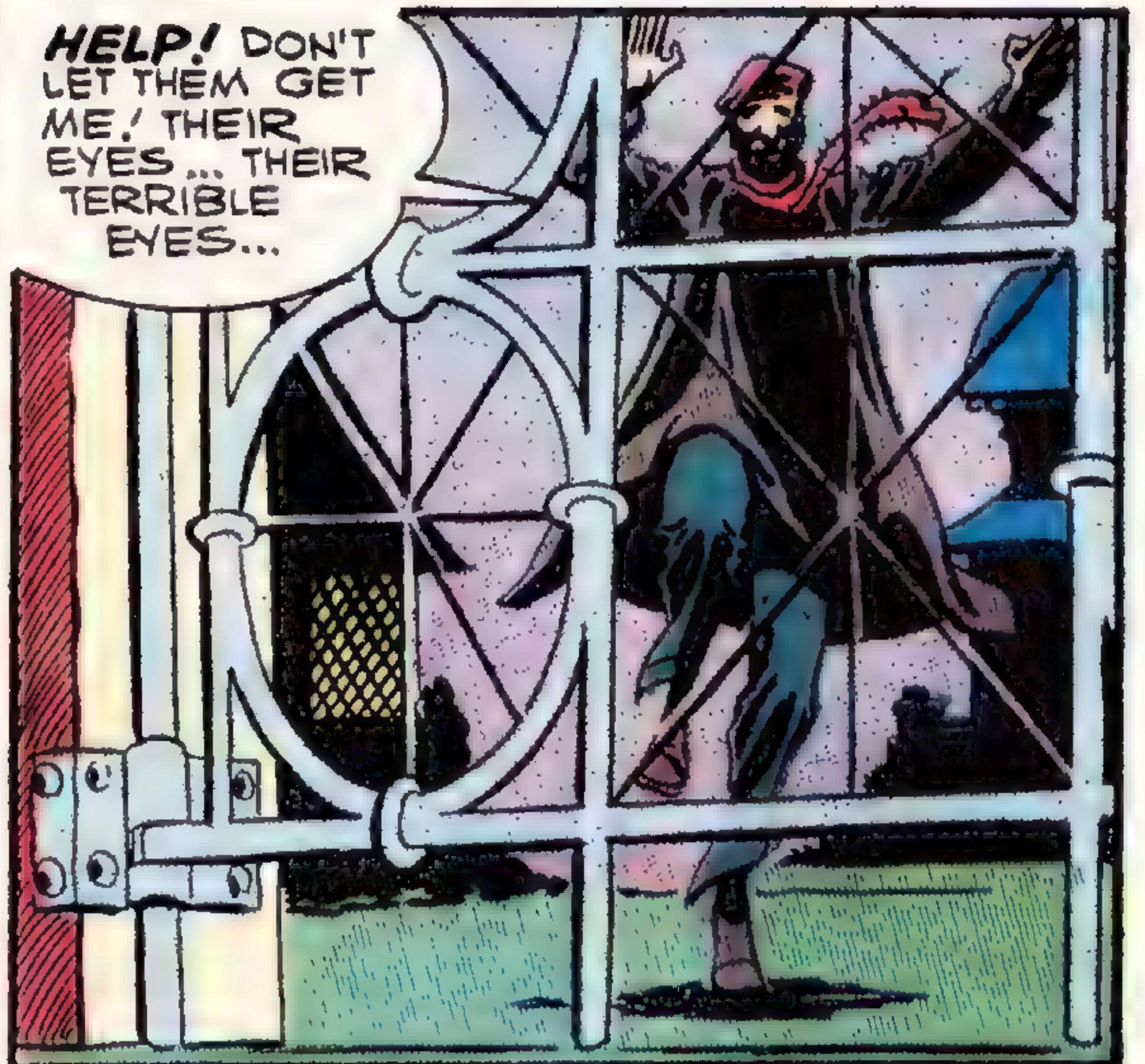
AND THIS WAS NO DREAM! ALL THOSE EYES WERE REAL...



AND THEY WERE COMING CLOSER -- CLOSER...



HELP! DON'T LET THEM GET ME! THEIR EYES... THEIR TERRIBLE EYES...



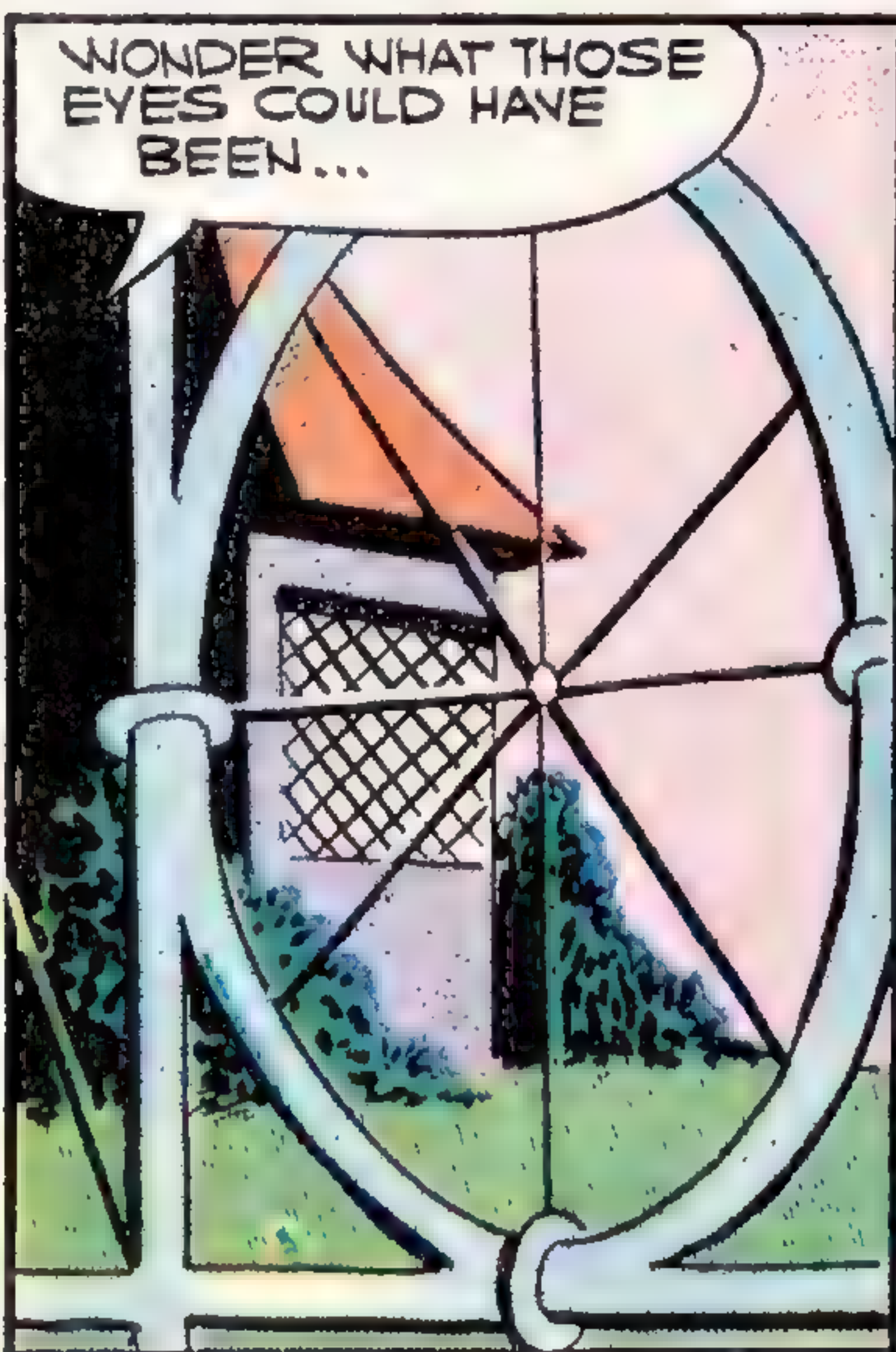
THE NEXT DAY...

LUCKY THAT SPY GAVE HIMSELF UP WHEN HE DID! IF HE'D STAYED JUST A FEW MORE MINUTES... WE'D HAVE CALLED OFF THE SEARCH!

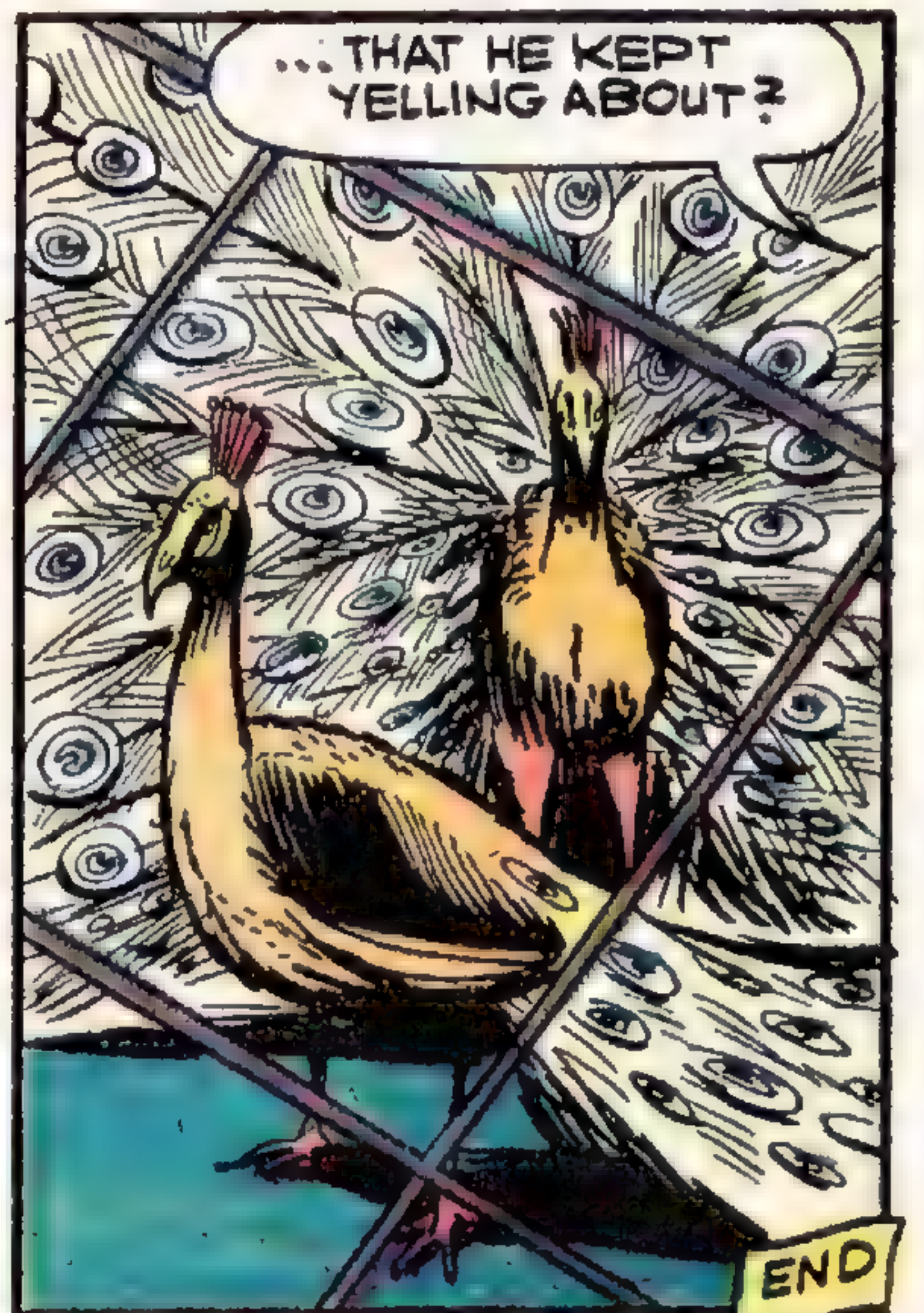
YES! BUT I WONDER WHAT REALLY MADE HIM CRACK!



WONDER WHAT THOSE EYES COULD HAVE BEEN...



... THAT HE KEPT YELLING ABOUT?



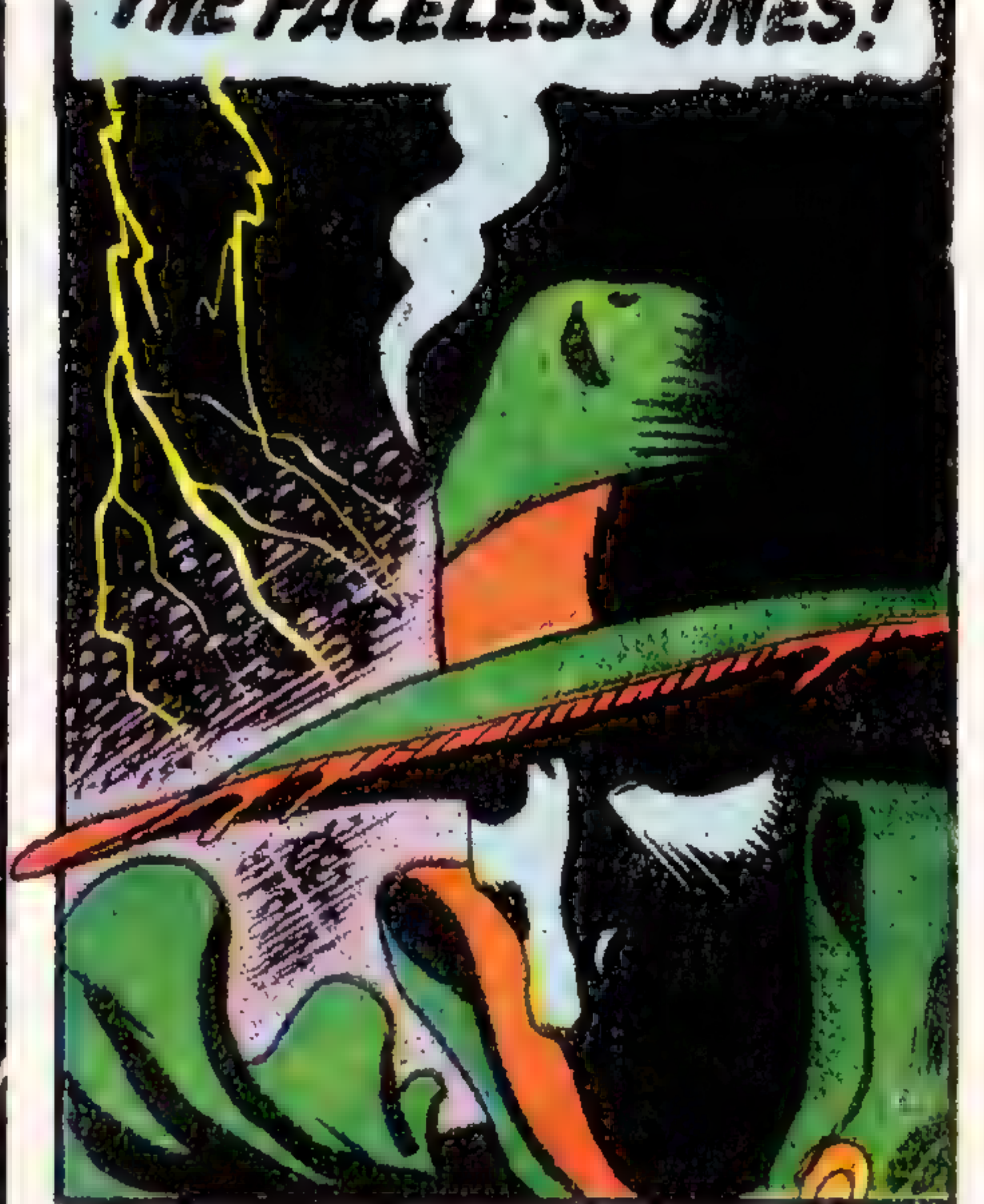
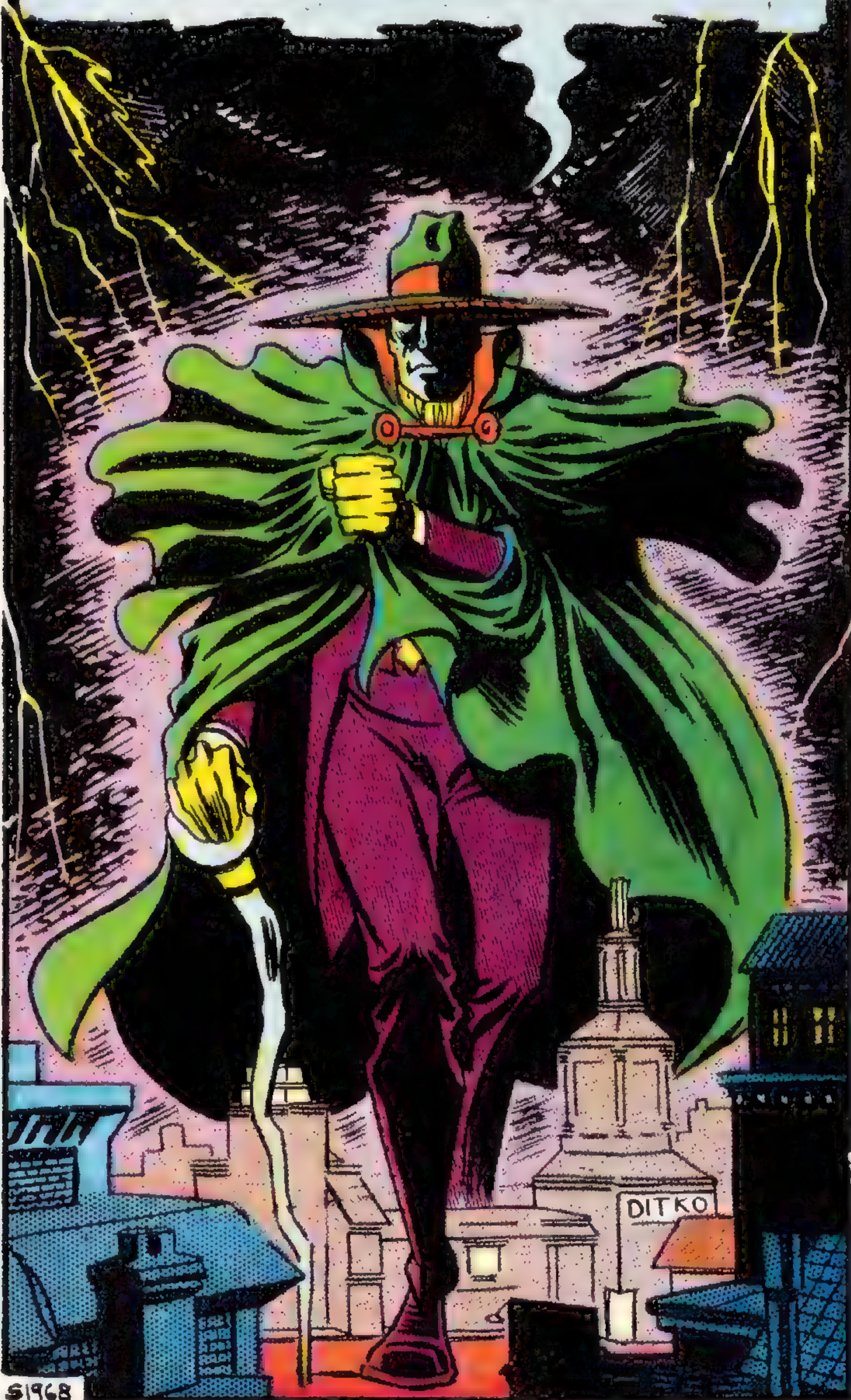
END

THIS MAGAZINE *IS* HAUNTED

YOU HAVE SEEN ME! YOU MISTOOK ME FOR A FURTIVE BLOB OF DARKNESS, STRANGELY DARKER THAN THE OTHER SHADOWS, AND FOR A SPLIT-SECOND YOU FOUND YOURSELF STARING PUZZLEDLY, BUT THEN THE FORM QUICKLY FADED... AND YOU FORGOT! YOU HAVE HEARD ME TOO! YOU MIS-TOOK MY DRY VOICE FOR THE THIN SCRATCHING OF DEAD LEAVES ACROSS YOUR WINDOWPANE... OR MY LAUGH FOR THE LONG DRAWN-OUT WAIL OF A TRAIN IN THE DISTANCE! BUT NOW THERE SHALL BE NO MISTAKE...

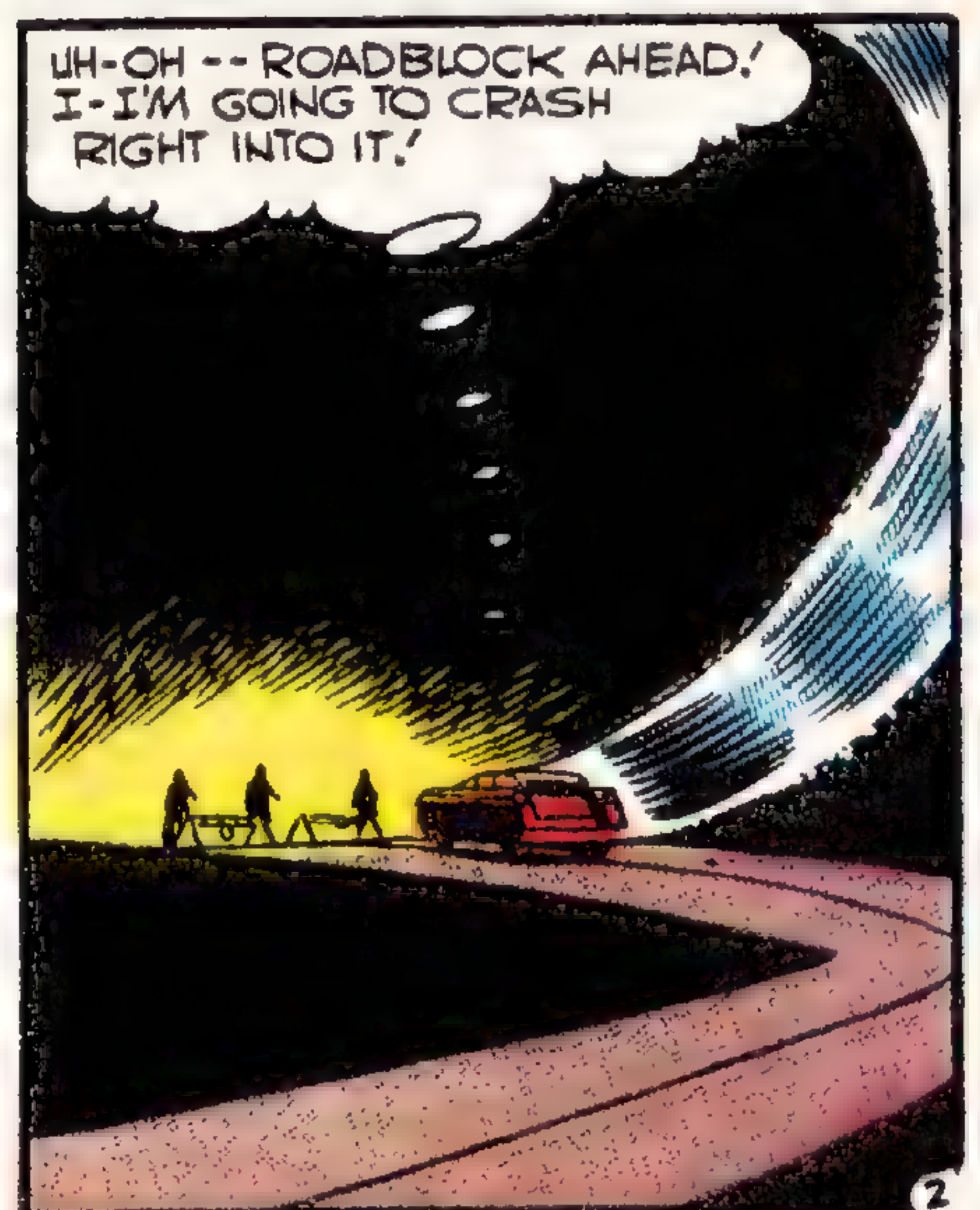
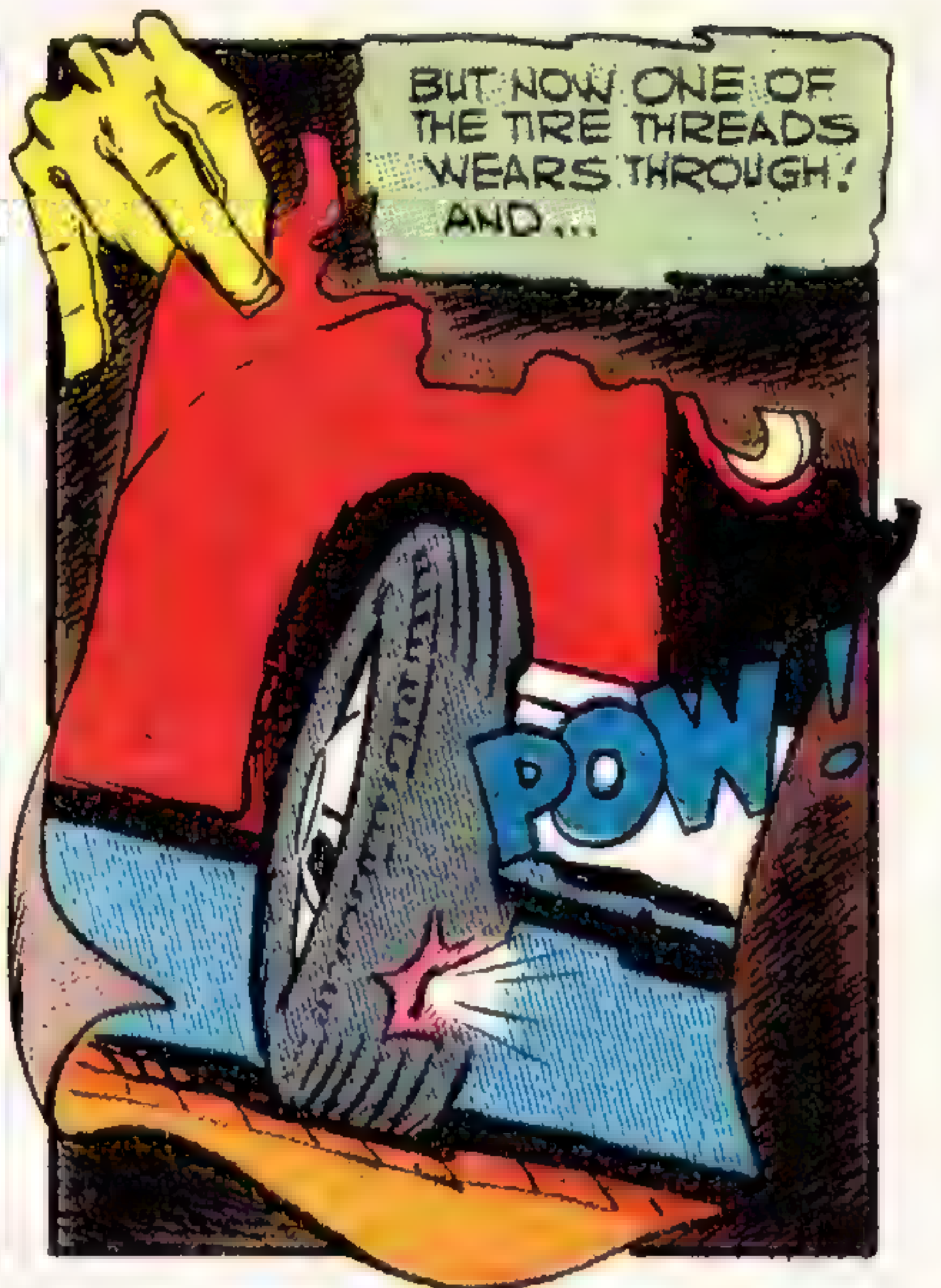
... NOW YOU SHALL HEAR DR. HAUNT CLEARLY AS I TELL MY HAUNTING TALES! AND I CAN READ YOUR MINDS! AT THIS MOMENT YOU ARE WONDERING WHAT MY FACE LOOKS LIKE! THIS YOU SHALL NEVER KNOW... BUT SINCE WE DWELL ON THE SUB-JECT, LET ME TELL YOU THE TALE OF

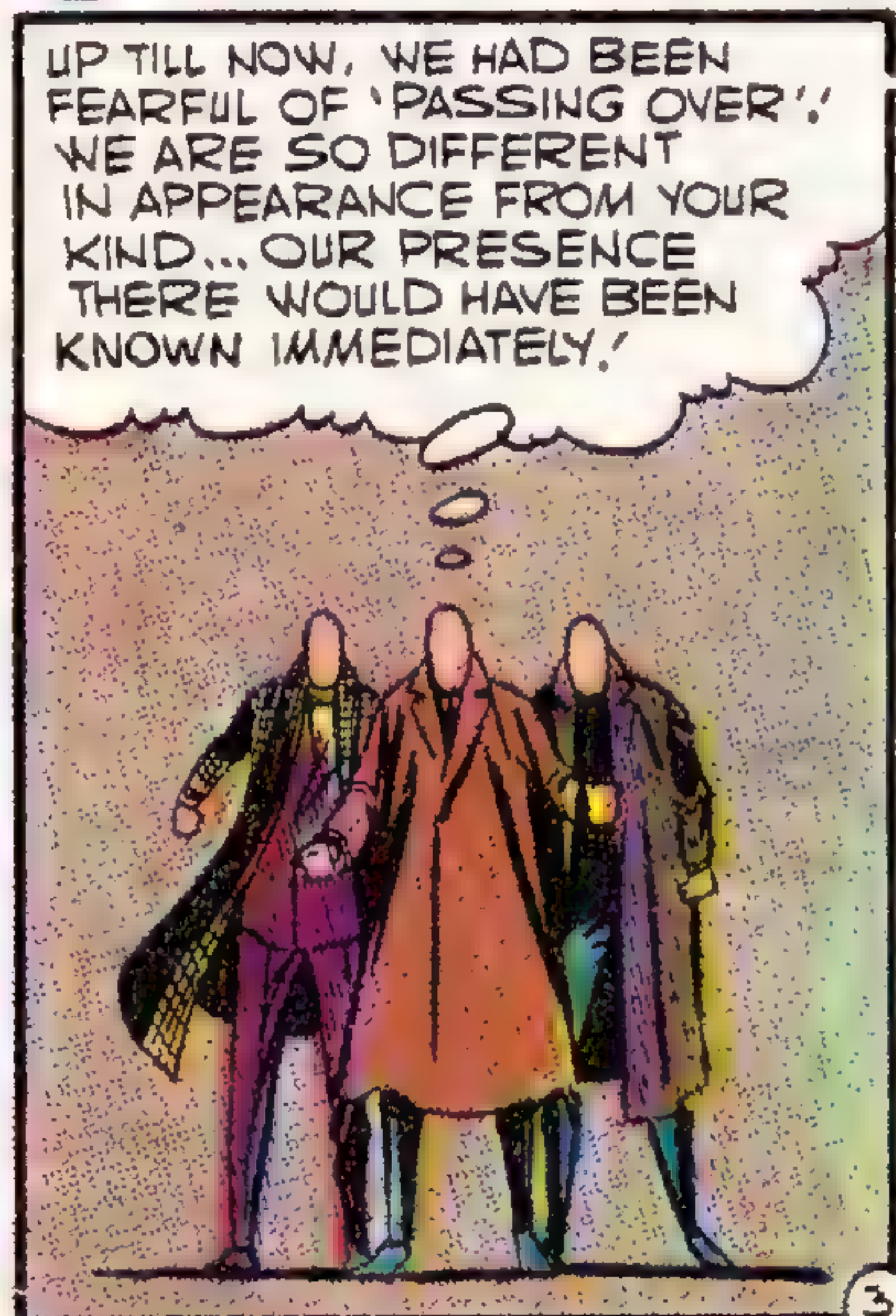
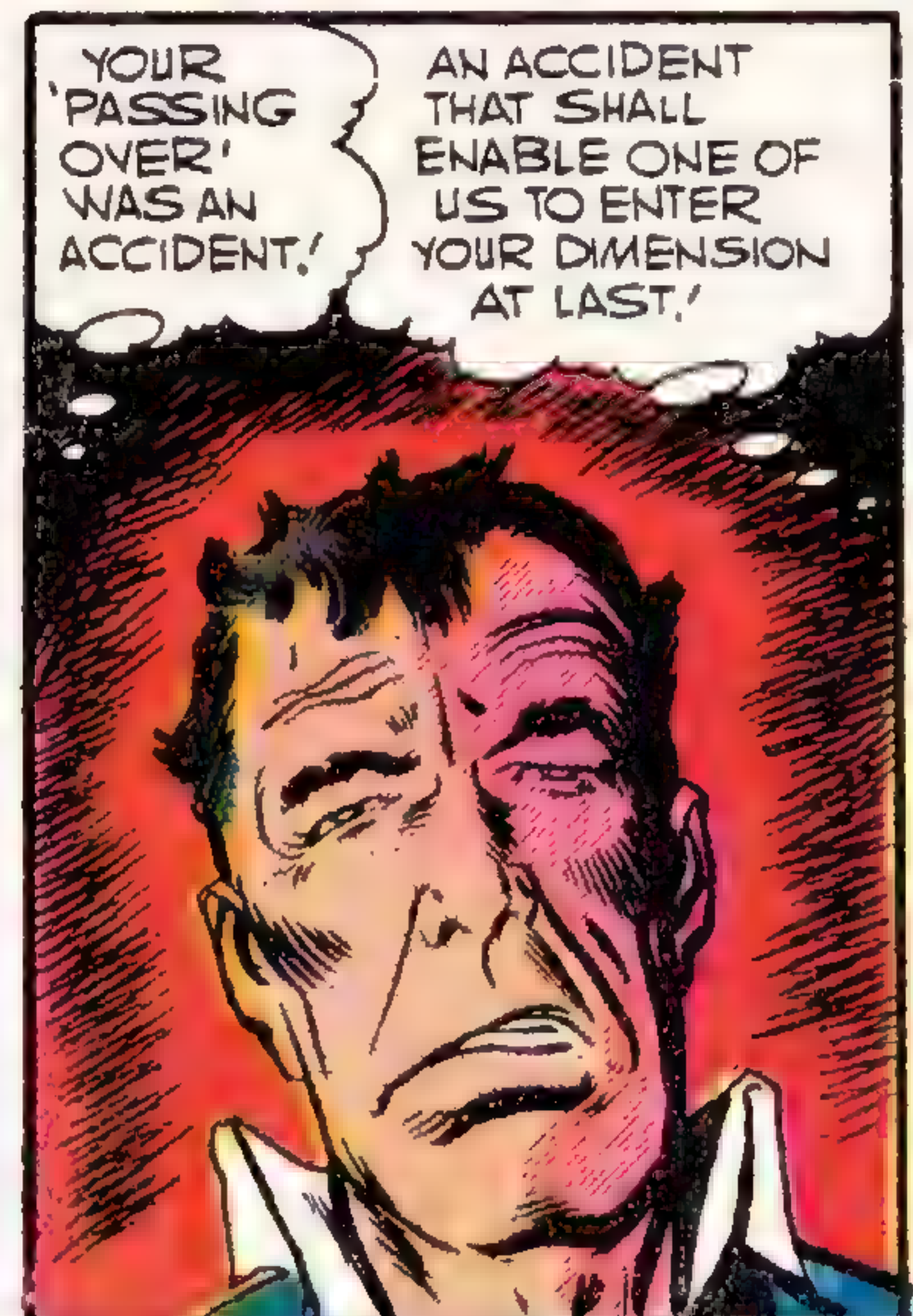
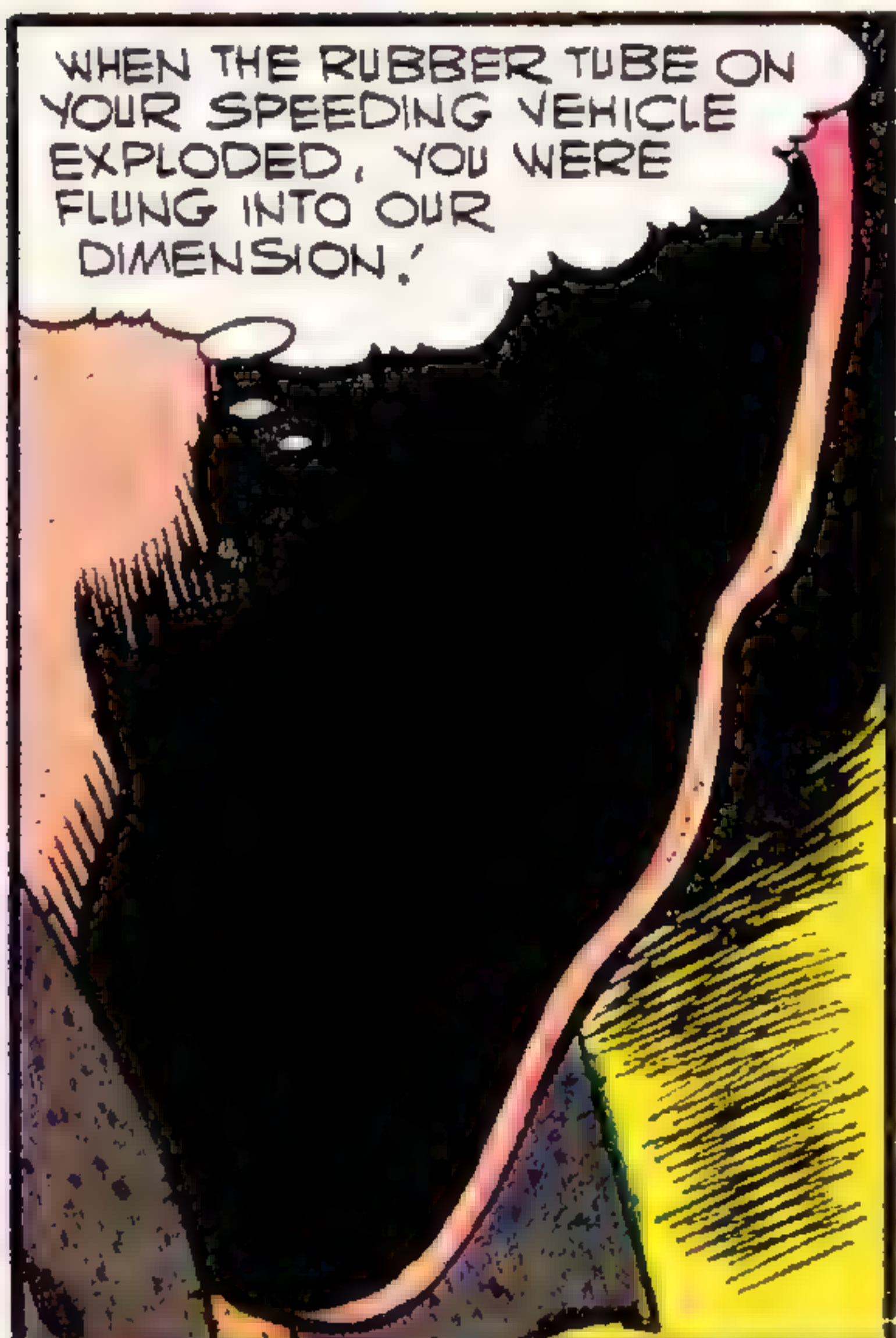
THE FACELESS ONES!

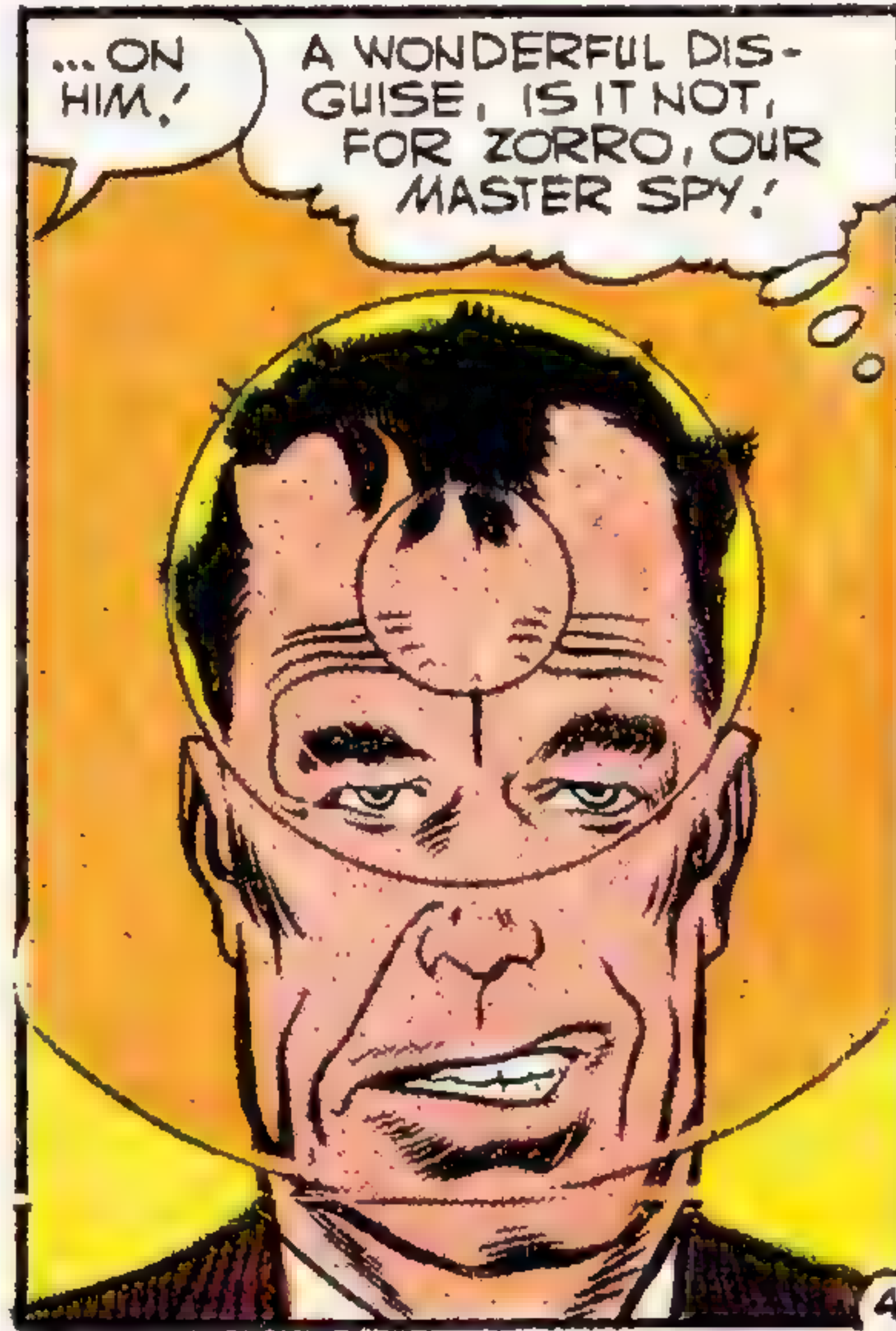
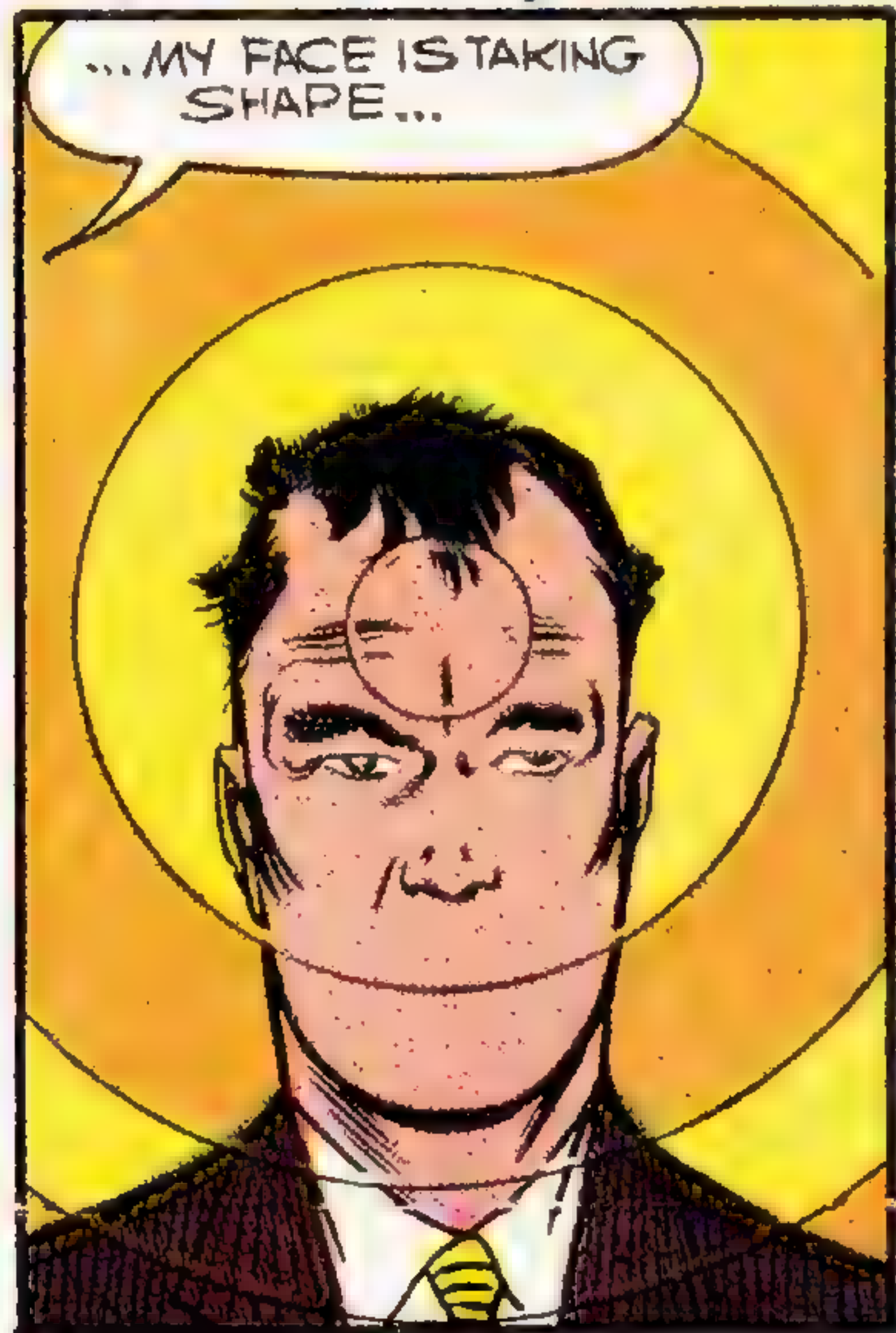
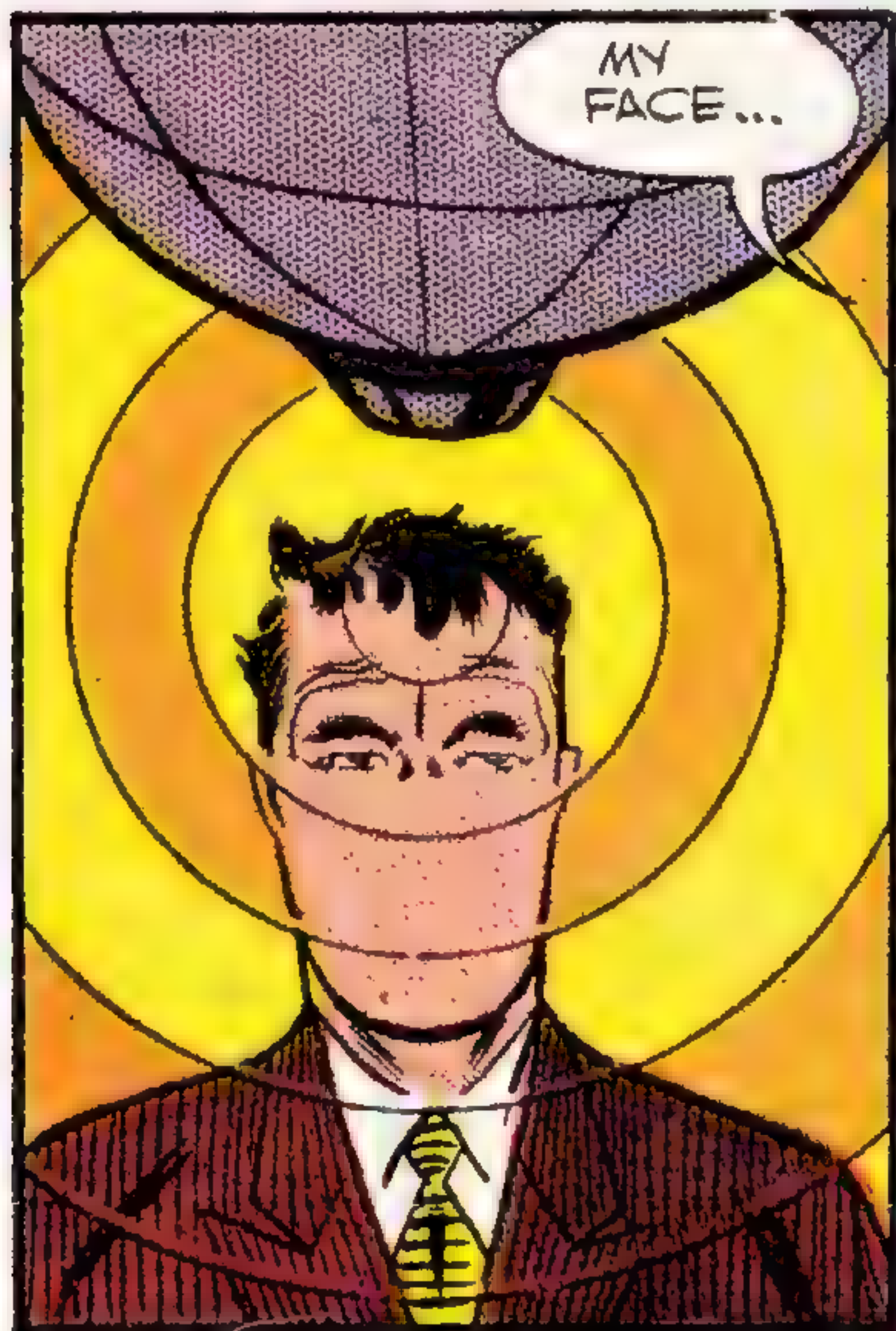
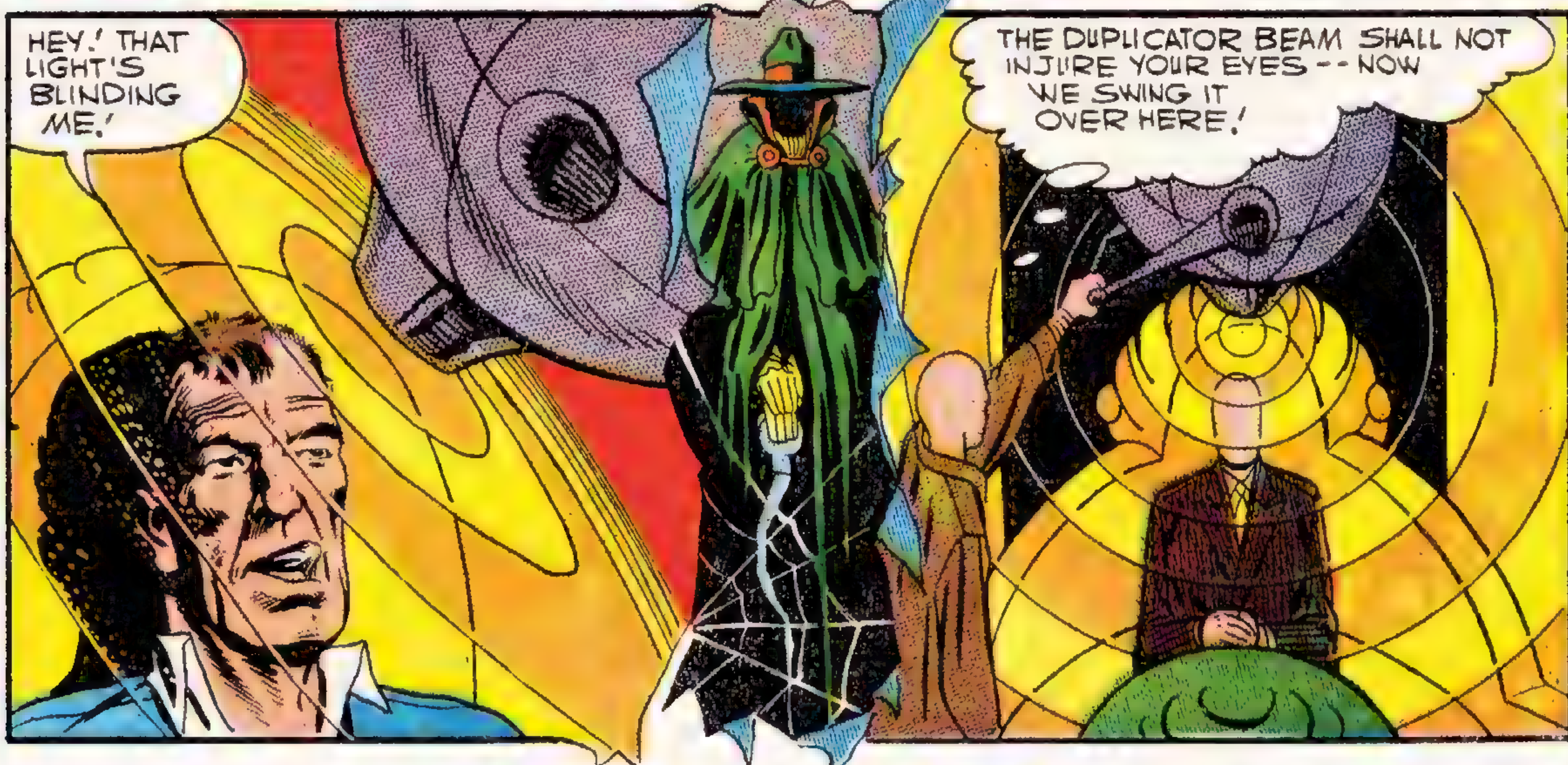
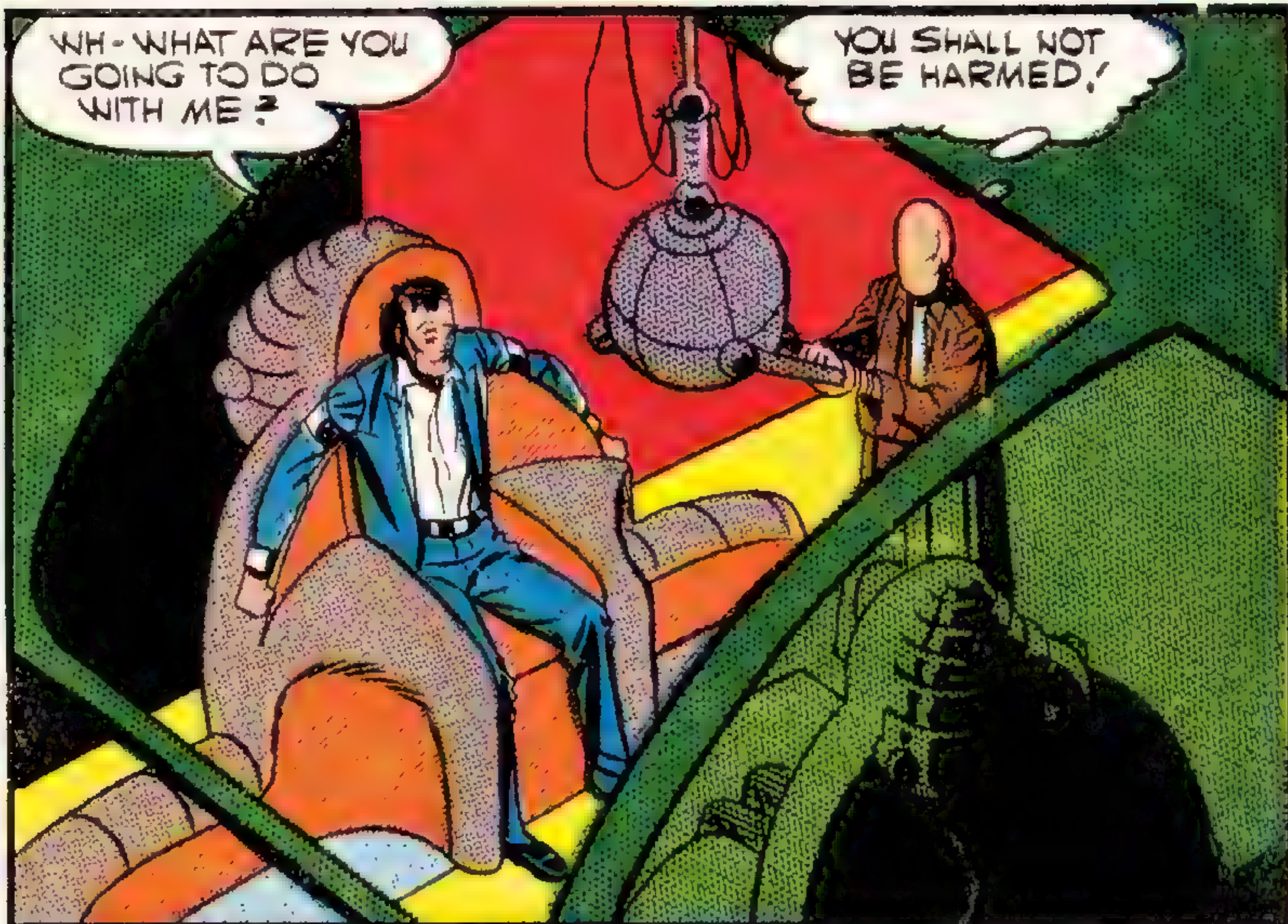


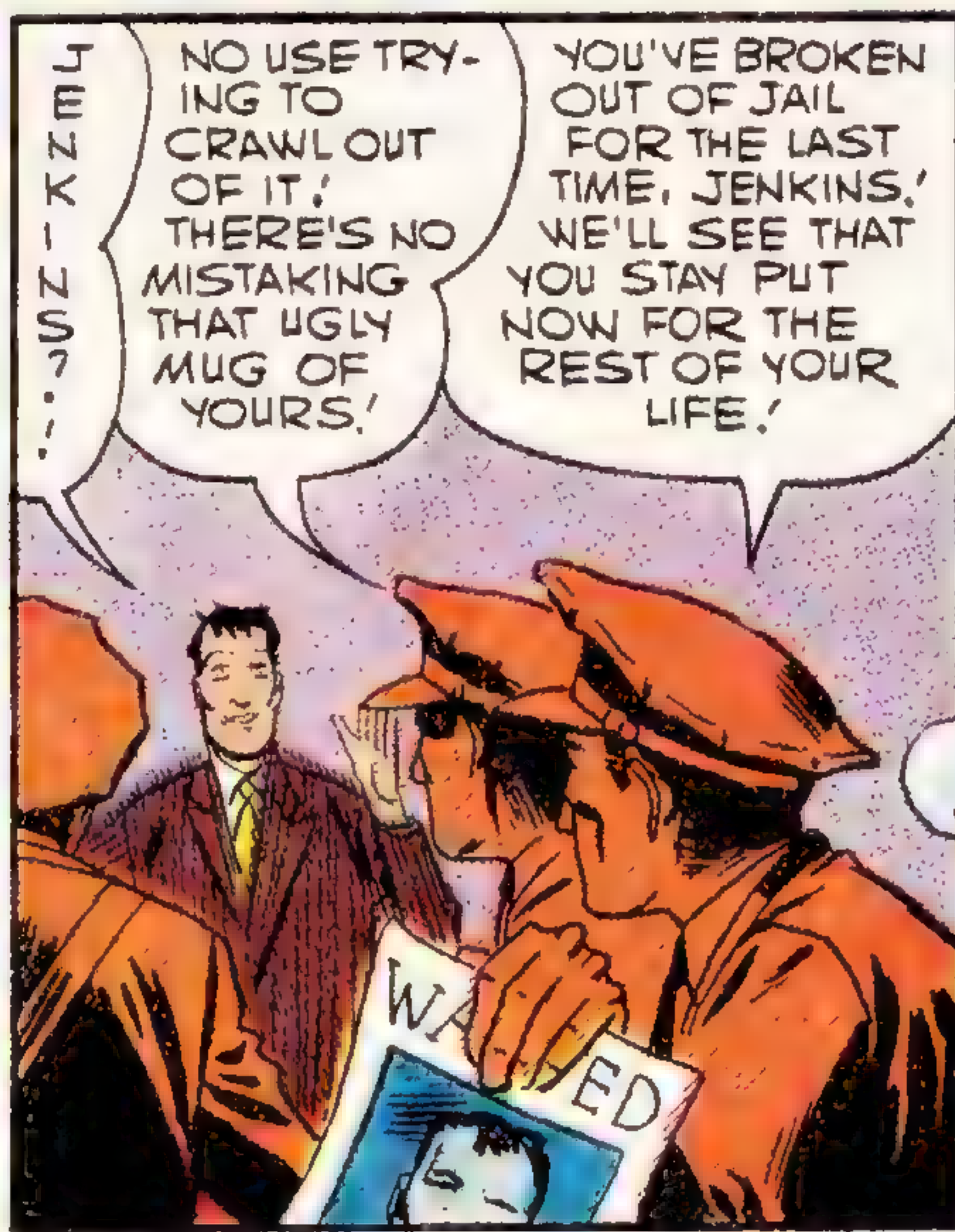
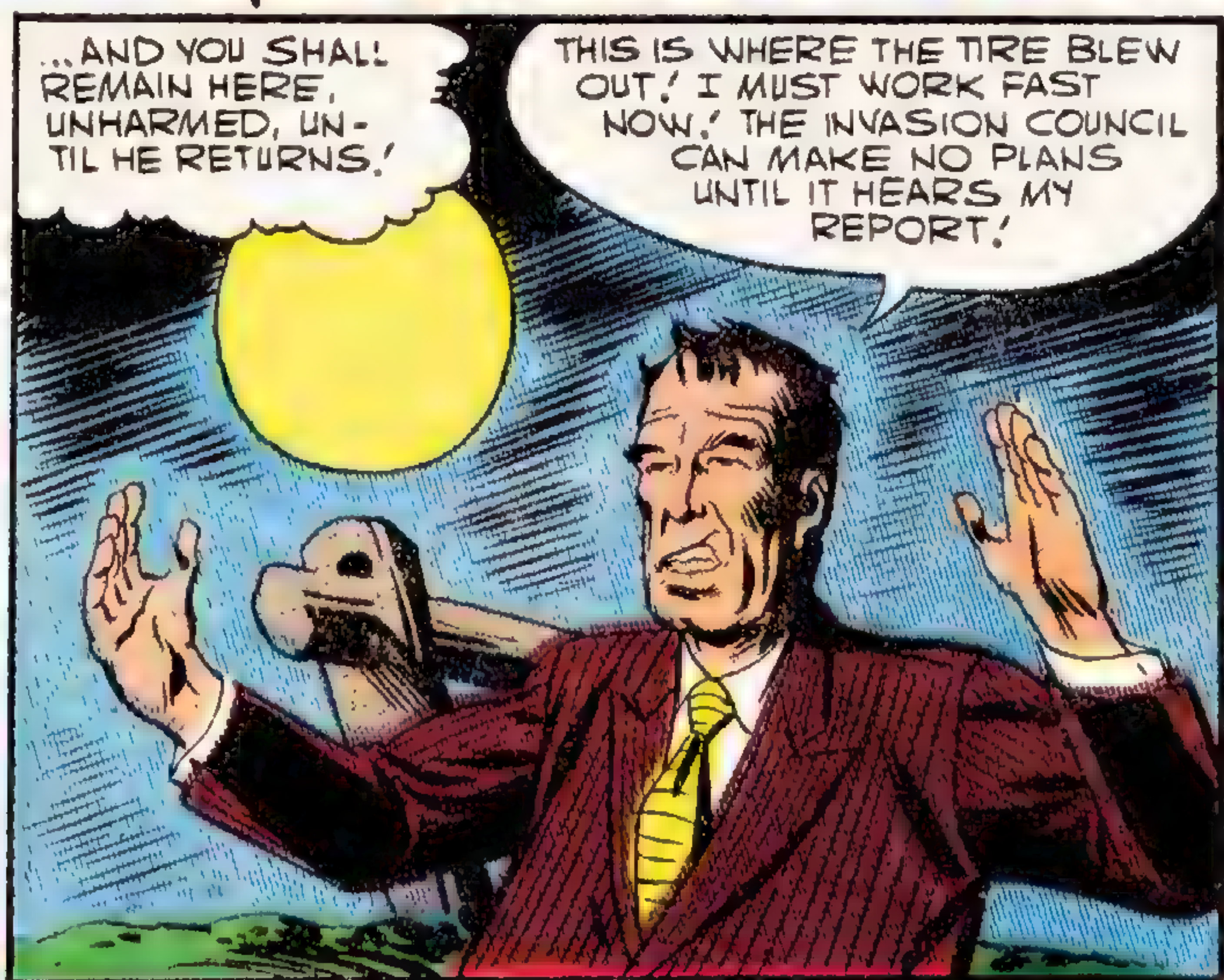
... IT STARTS WITH A CAR HURLING ALONG A LONELY ROAD AT NIGHT! THE WIND MOANS SHRILLY! THE TIRES WHINE AND SCREECH... AND FEAR KEEPS NUDGING THE FOOT THAT PASSES DOWN ON THE ACCELERATOR!











The **THING** on the BEACH

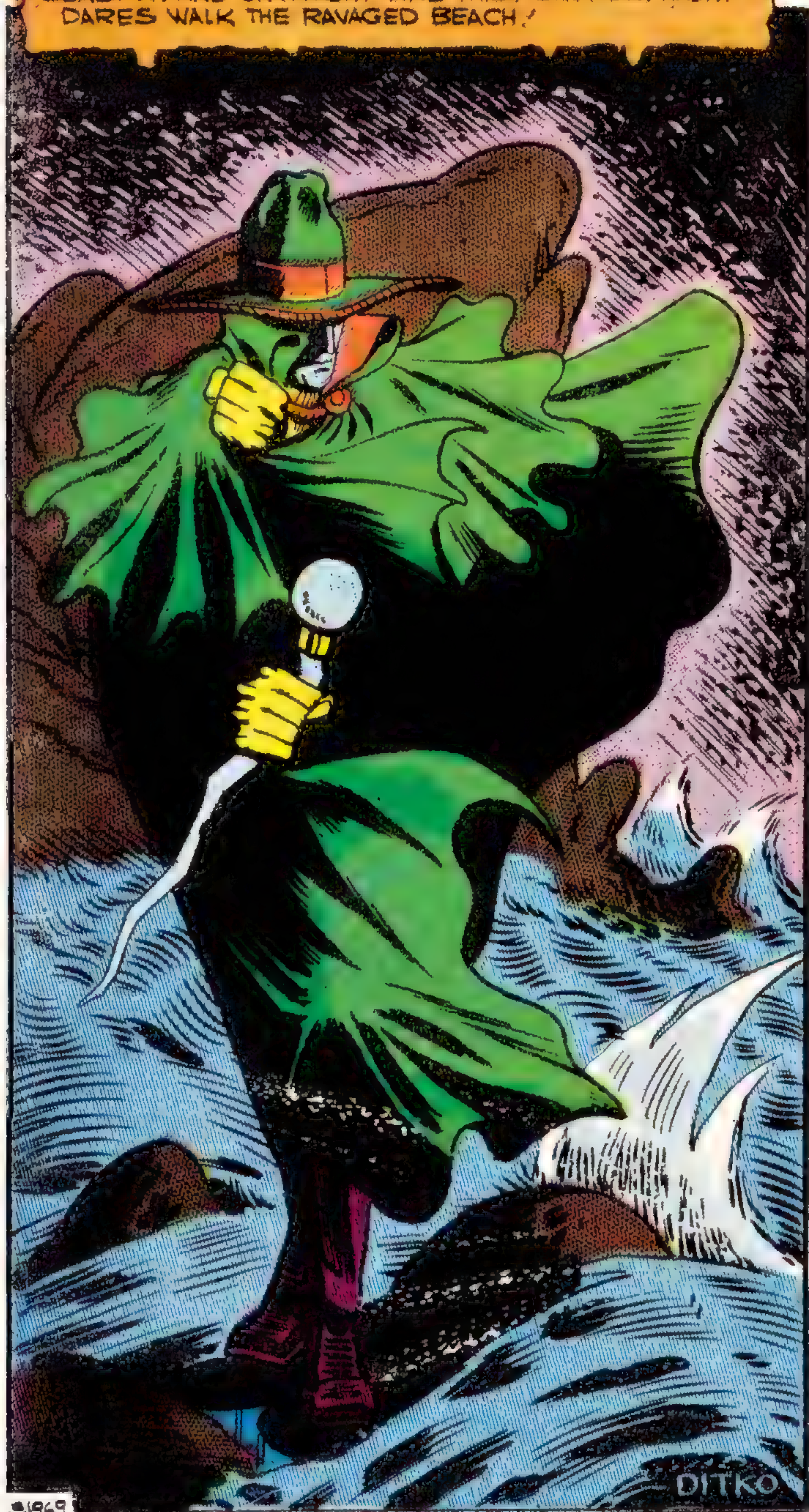
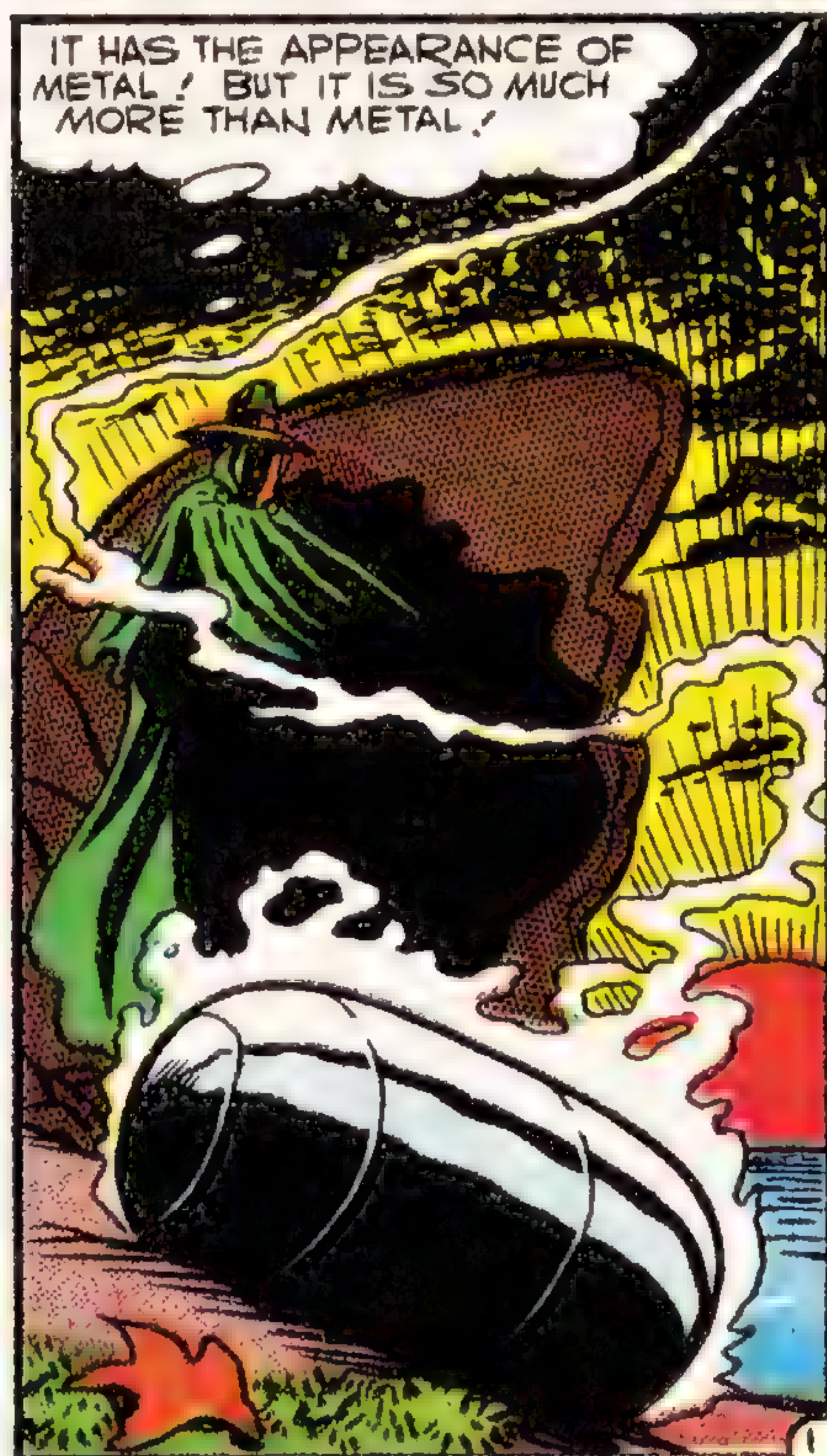
THE SURF IS MERCILESS TONIGHT! THE WAVES KEEP POUNDING WITH A THOUSAND-FISTED FURY AT THE NARROW STRETCH OF SHUDDERING ROCK AND SAND! THE SURF ROARS TONIGHT LIKE AN UNCHAINED SAVAGE BEAST... AND ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS, ONLY DR. HAUNT DARES WALK THE RAVAGED BEACH!

ONLY DR. HAUNT SEES THE THING SPEWED UP FROM THE OCEAN'S DEPTH...

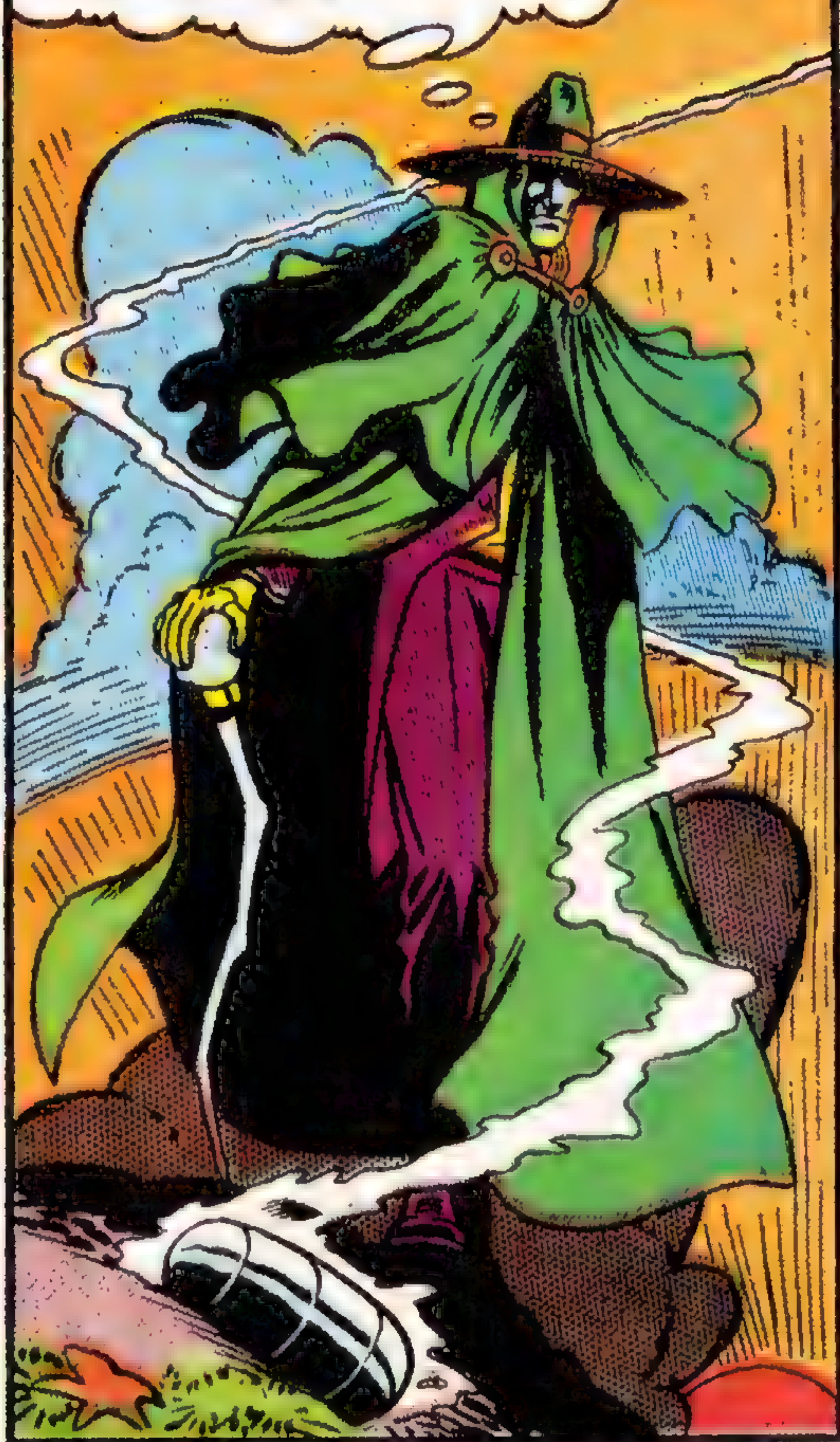


IT IS DAWN NOW, BUT I DARE NOT MOVE! I MUST STAY TO WATCH THE THING! I MUST BE A WITNESS TO THE UNFOLDING OF ITS EVIL POWERS..

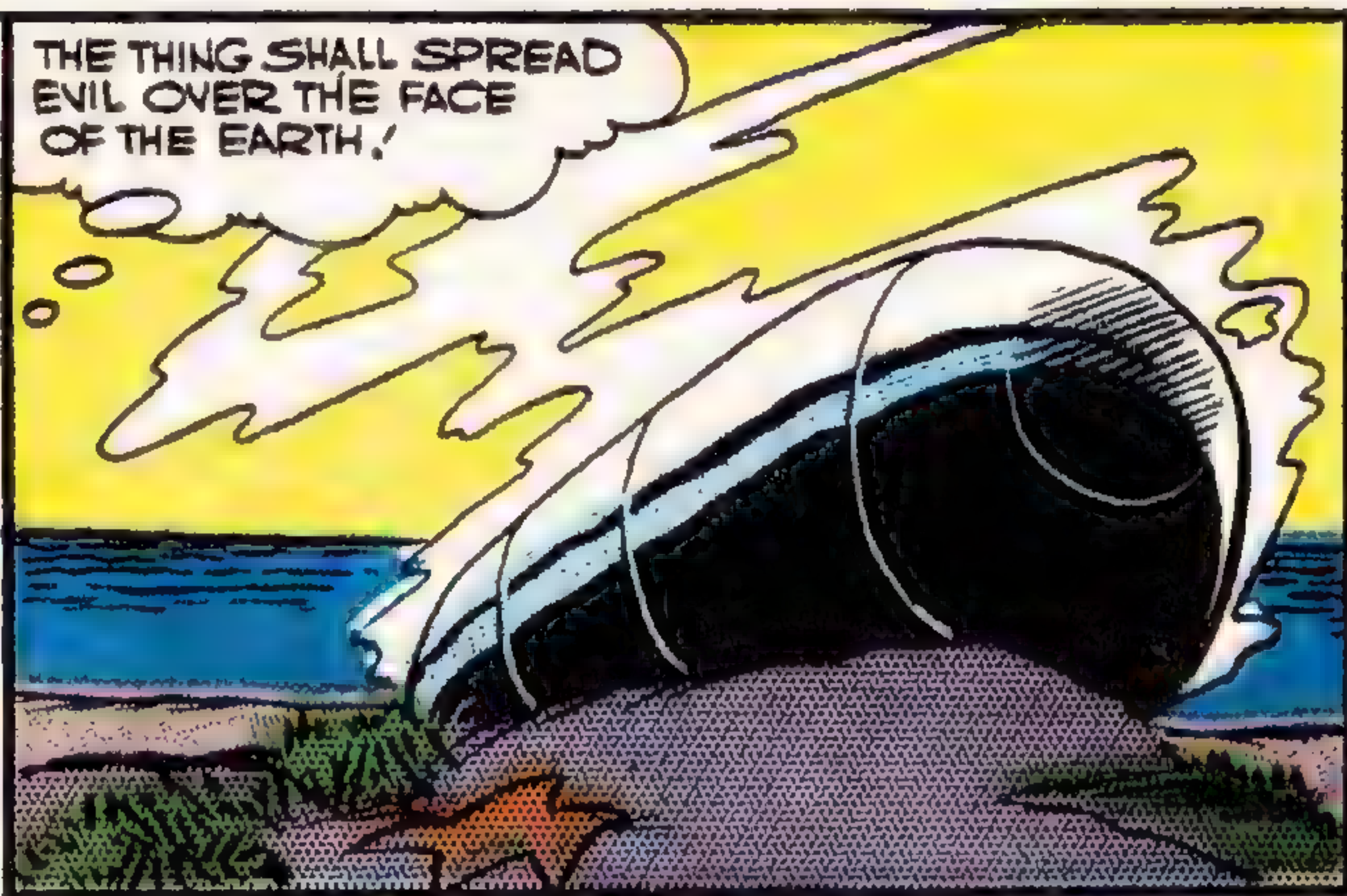
IT HAS THE APPEARANCE OF METAL! BUT IT IS SO MUCH MORE THAN METAL!



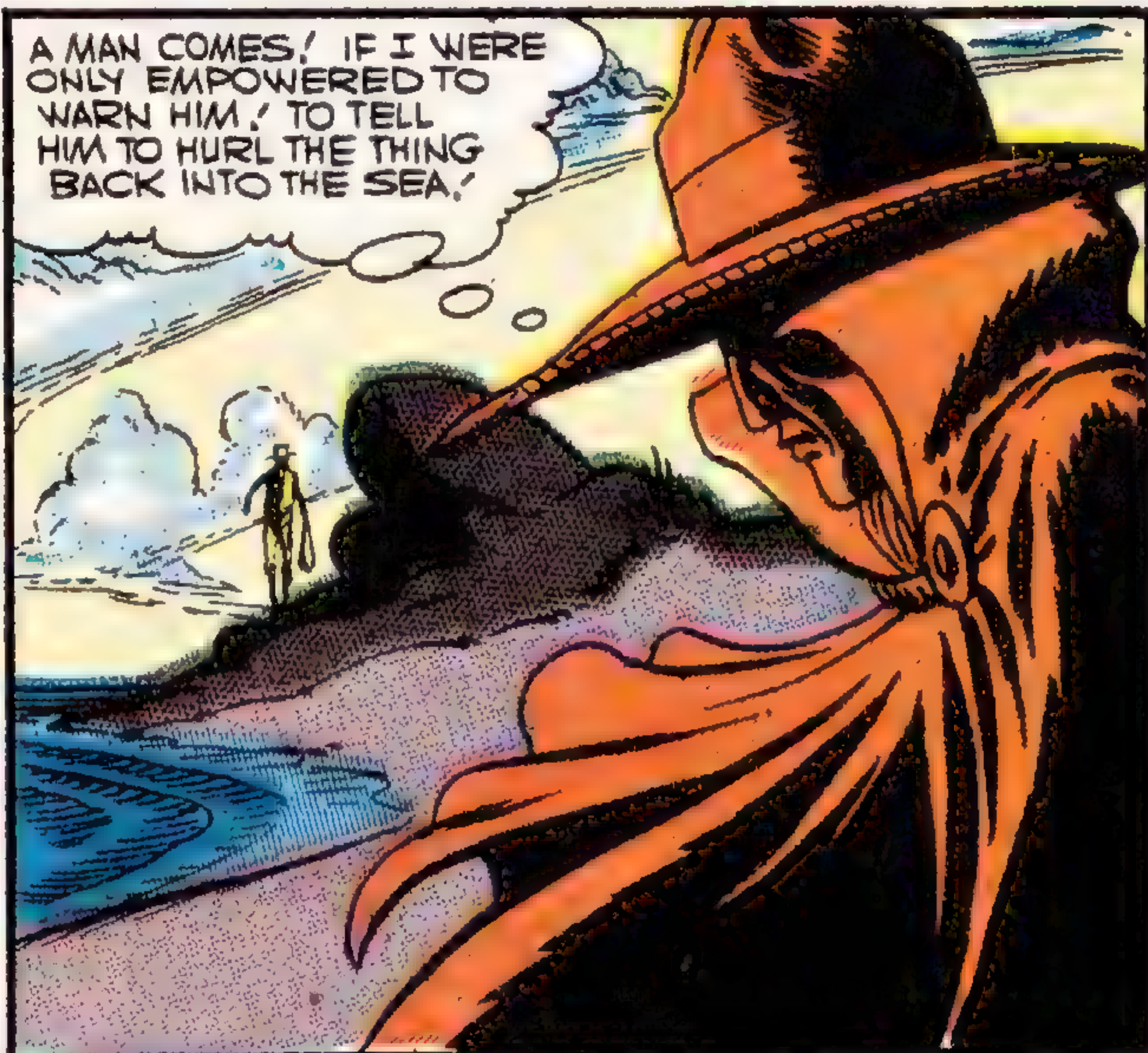
IN ITS PRESENT FORM, IT IS DORMANT!
BUT IT HAS THE POWER TO ASSUME
HUMAN FORM BY BORROWING
SEGMENTS FROM THOSE IT MEETS!
AND ONCE ITS MORTAL GUISE
IS COMPLETE...



THE THING SHALL SPREAD
EVIL OVER THE FACE
OF THE EARTH!



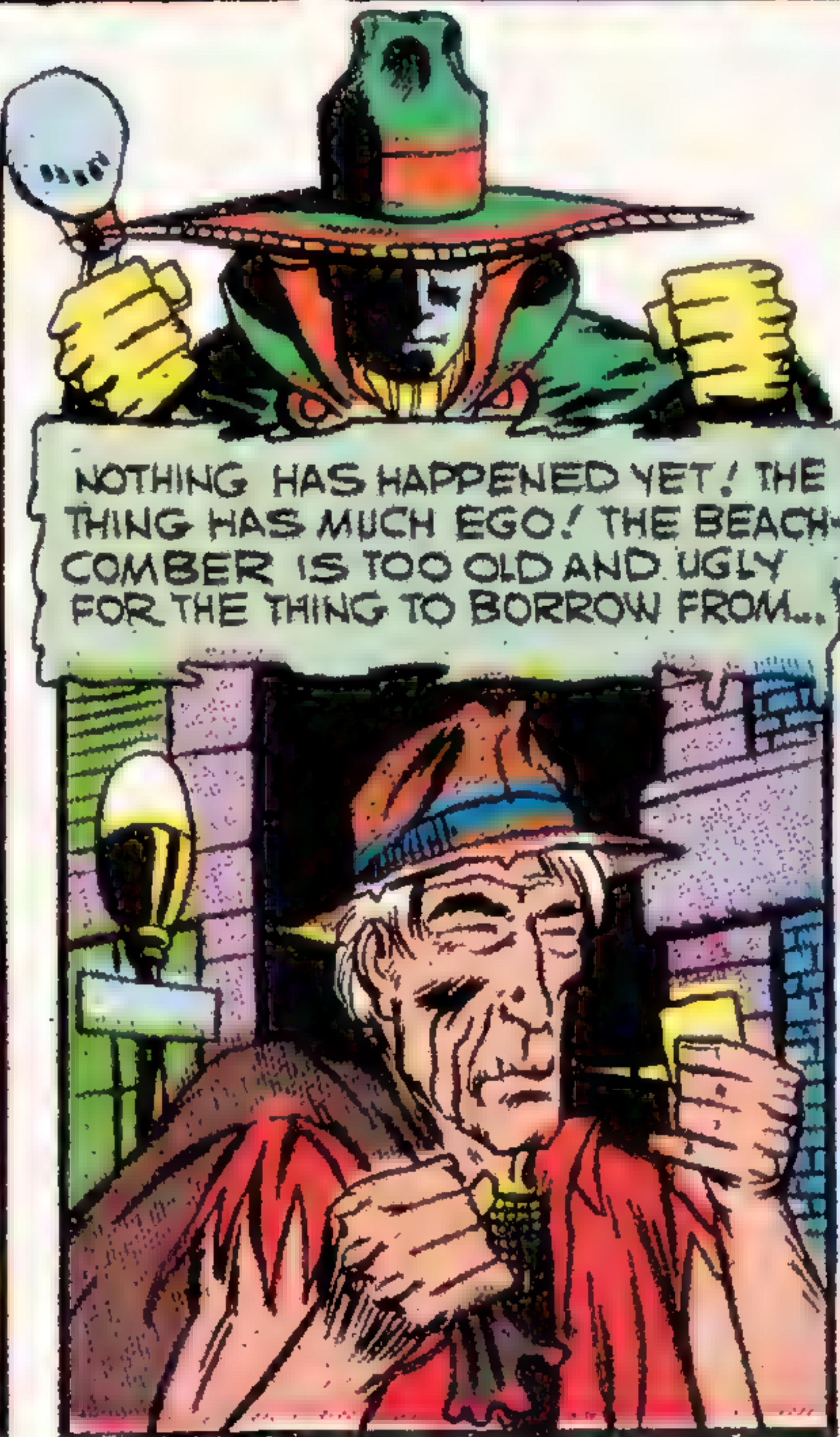
A MAN COMES! IF I WERE
ONLY EMPOWERED TO
WARN HIM! TO TELL
HIM TO HURL THE THING
BACK INTO THE SEA!



HE IS A BEACHCOMBER! HE
BENDS NOW TO PICK UP THE
THING...



NOTHING HAS HAPPENED YET! THE
THING HAS MUCH EGO! THE BEACH-
COMBER IS TOO OLD AND UGLY
FOR THE THING TO BORROW FROM...



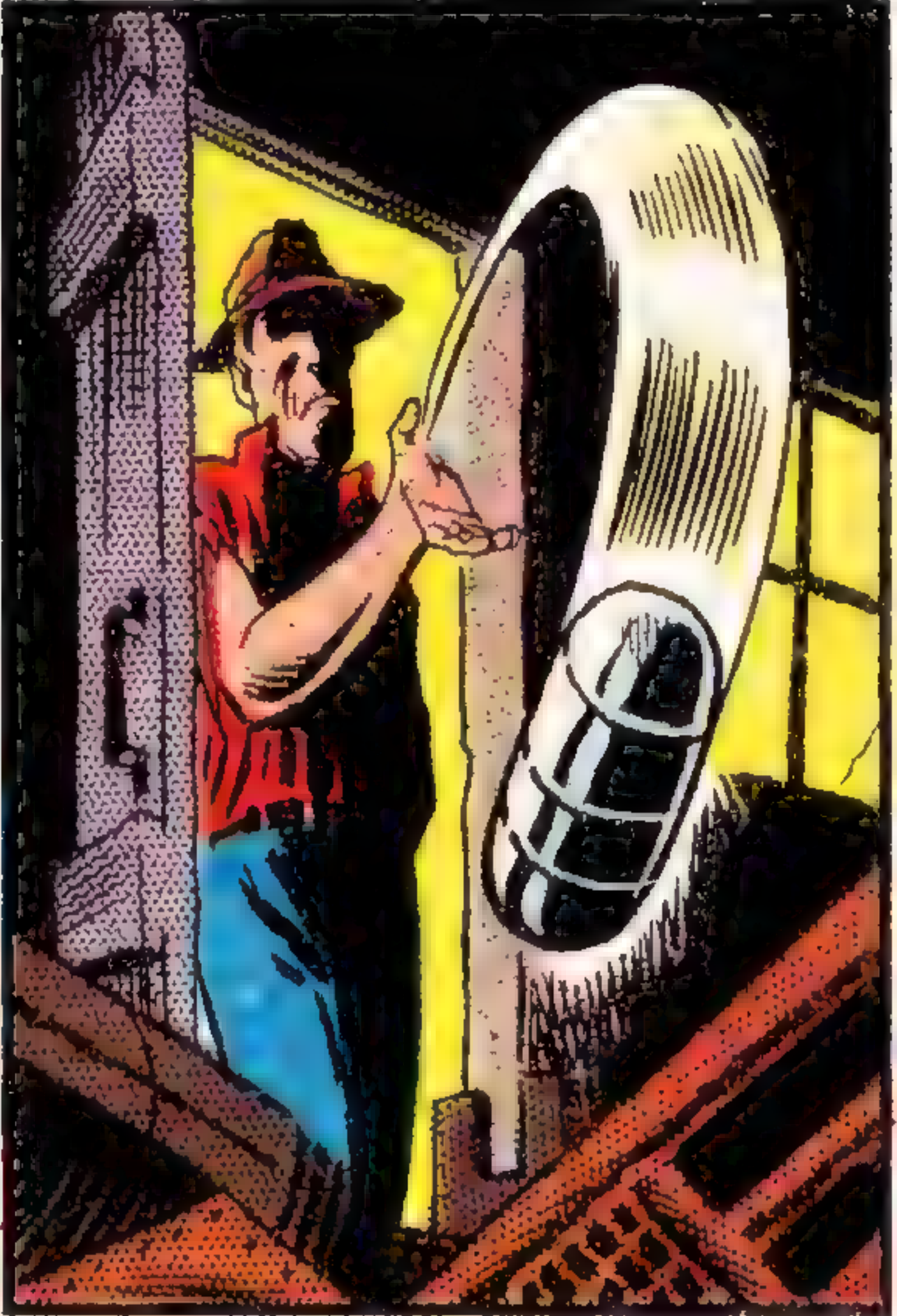
WHAT'D YOU
PICK UP TO-
DAY?

JUST A HUNK OF
METAL! WANT
TO BUY IT?



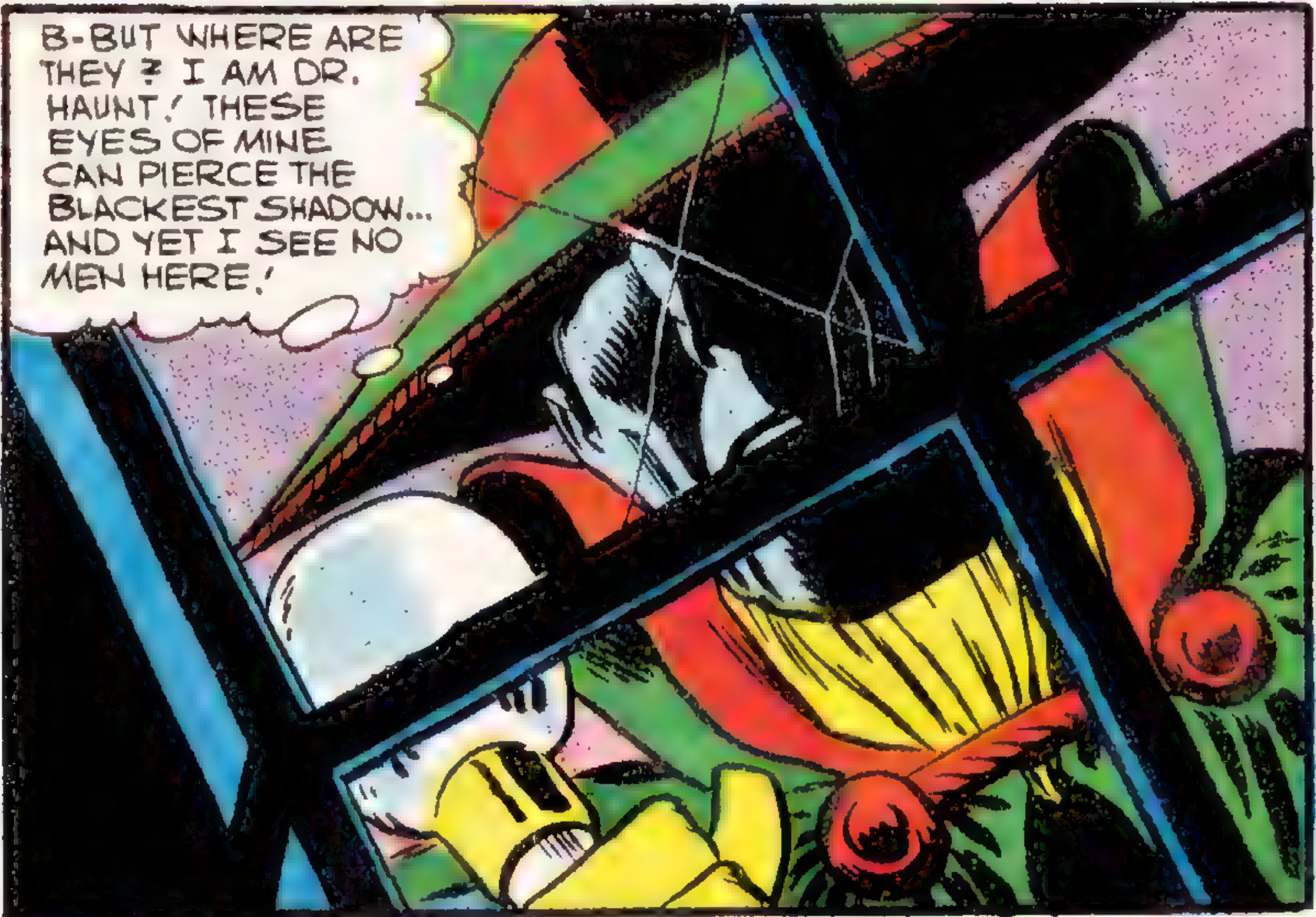


DUMP IT IN THE SHED! I'LL PAY YOU ON THE WAY OUT!

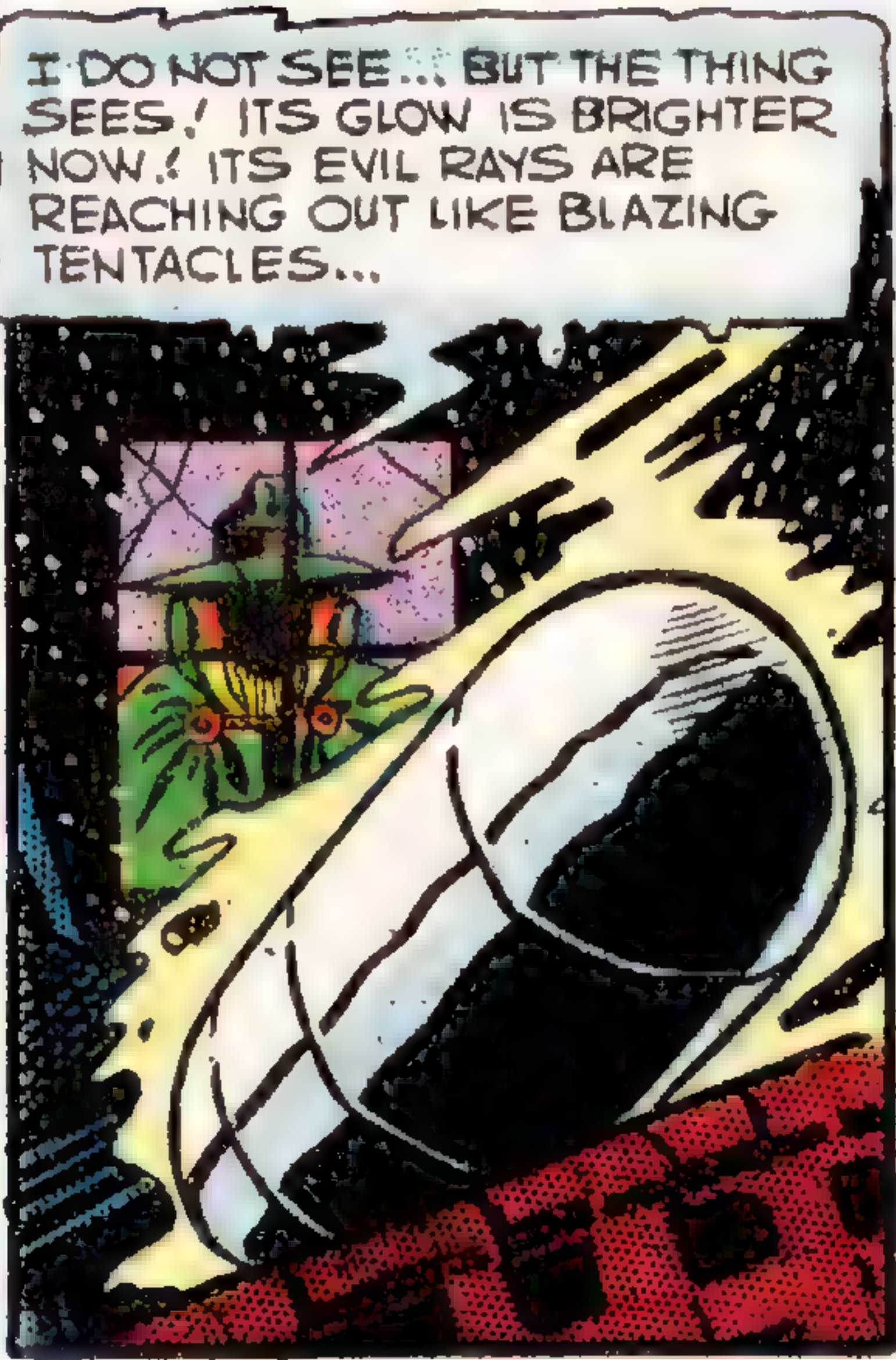


IF I COULD ONLY WARN THEM! BUT MY ROLE IS LIMITED TO WATCHING... AND THEN TELLING HAUNTING TALES OF WHAT I'VE SEEN...

NIGHT HAS FALLEN NOW... AND SHADOWS SHROUD THE JUNK-YARD! BUT INSIDE THE SHED THE THING HAS BEGUN TO GLOW! THE PULSATING BRILLIANCE OF ITS EVIL LIGHT CAN MEAN ONLY THAT IT HAS FOUND MORE THAN ONE VICTIM TO BORROW FROM... IN ITS QUEST FOR HUMAN FORM...



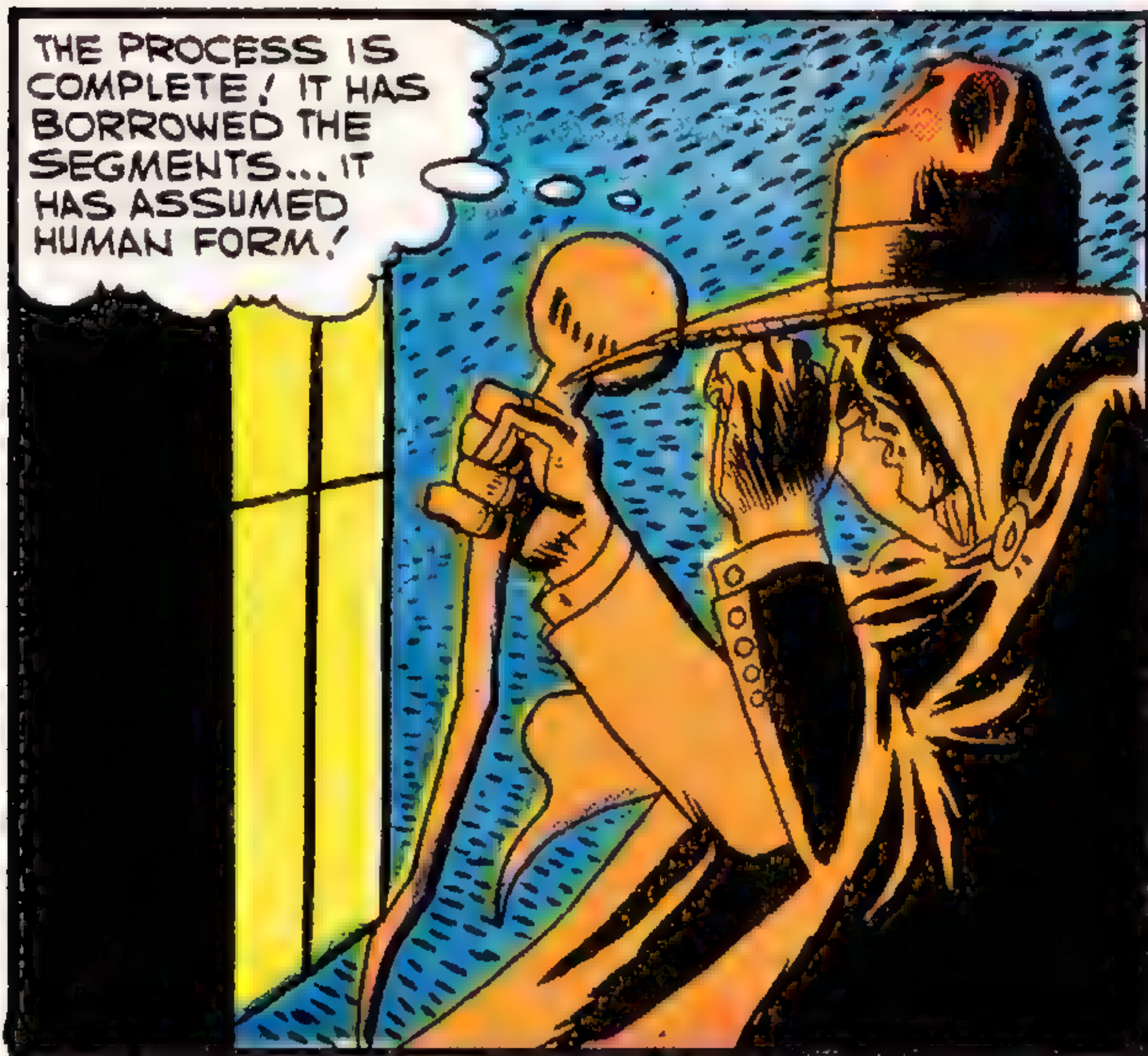
B-BUT WHERE ARE THEY? I AM DR. HAUNT! THESE EYES OF MINE CAN PIERCE THE BLACKEST SHADOW... AND YET I SEE NO MEN HERE!



I DO NOT SEE... BUT THE THING SEES! ITS GLOW IS BRIGHTER NOW! ITS EVIL RAYS ARE REACHING OUT LIKE BLAZING TENTACLES...



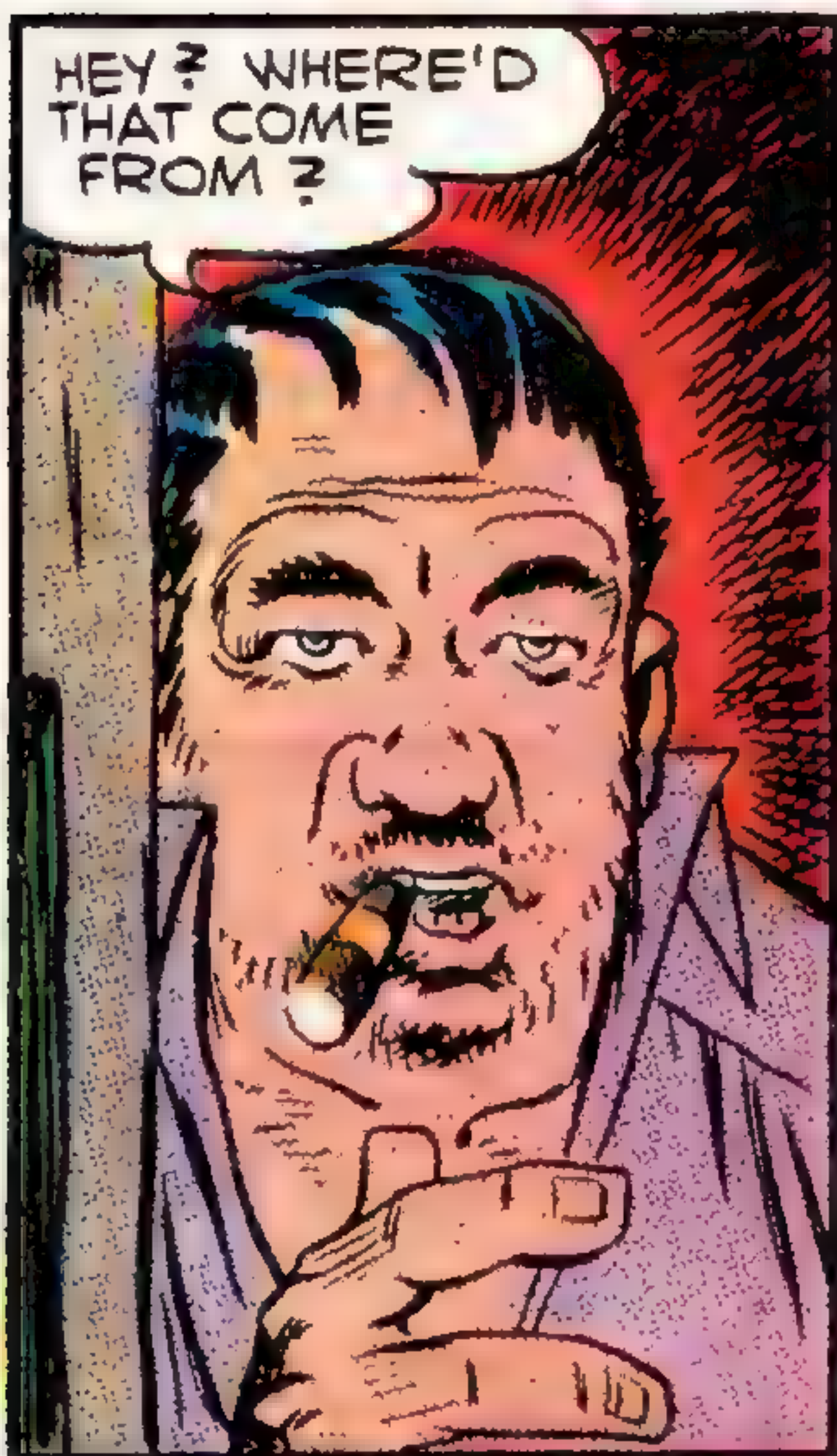
CLOSER! CLOSER! I SEE THEM NOW! I SEE THOSE WHOM THE THING SHALL BORROW FROM! THEY ARE YOUNG... AND THEY ARE HANDSOME...



THE PROCESS IS COMPLETE! IT HAS BORROWED THE SEGMENTS... IT HAS ASSUMED HUMAN FORM!



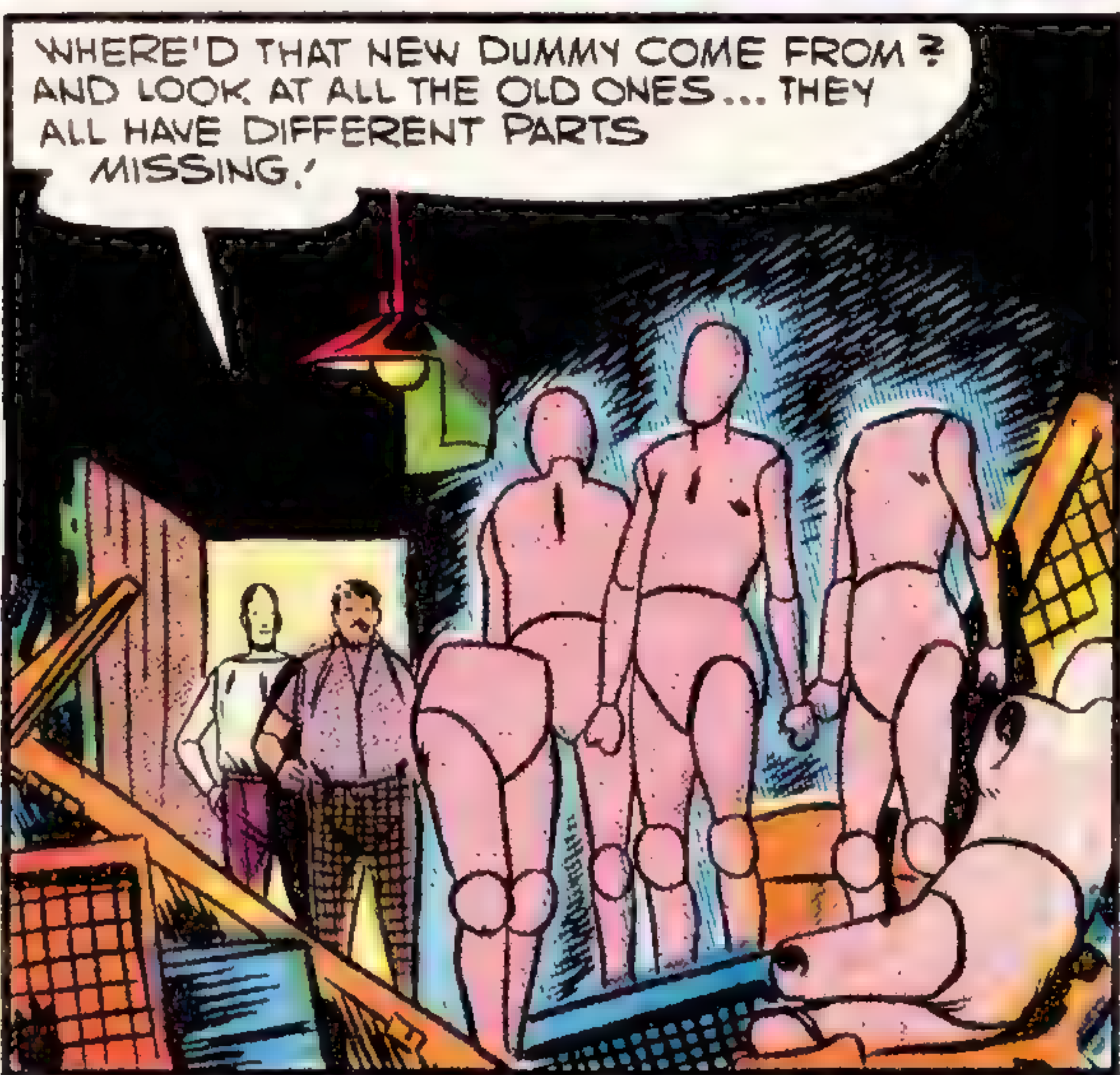
SO WHY DOES DR. HAUNT SMILE NOW? WAIT UNTIL MORNING... AND YOU SHALL SEE WHY...



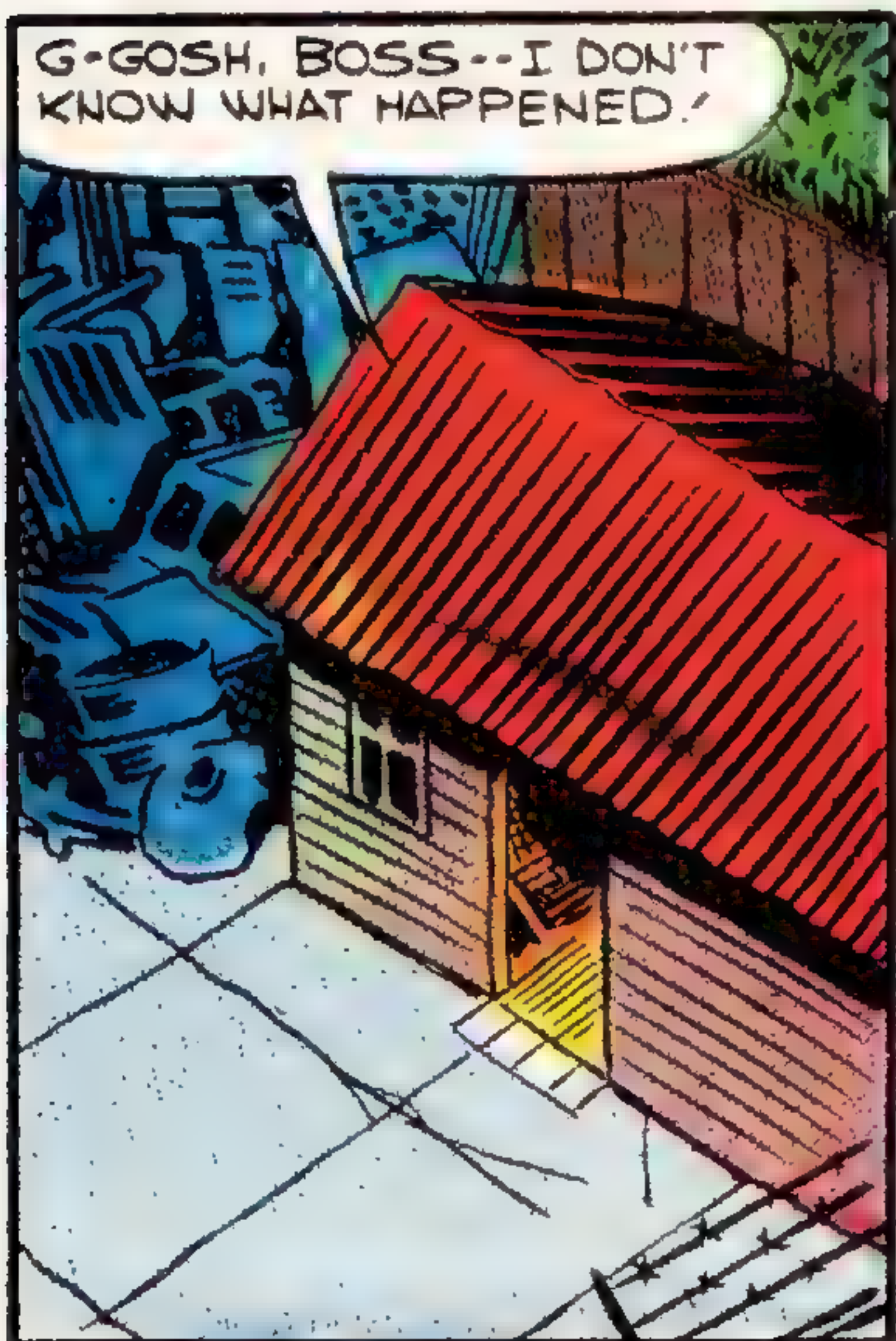
HEY? WHERE'D THAT COME FROM?



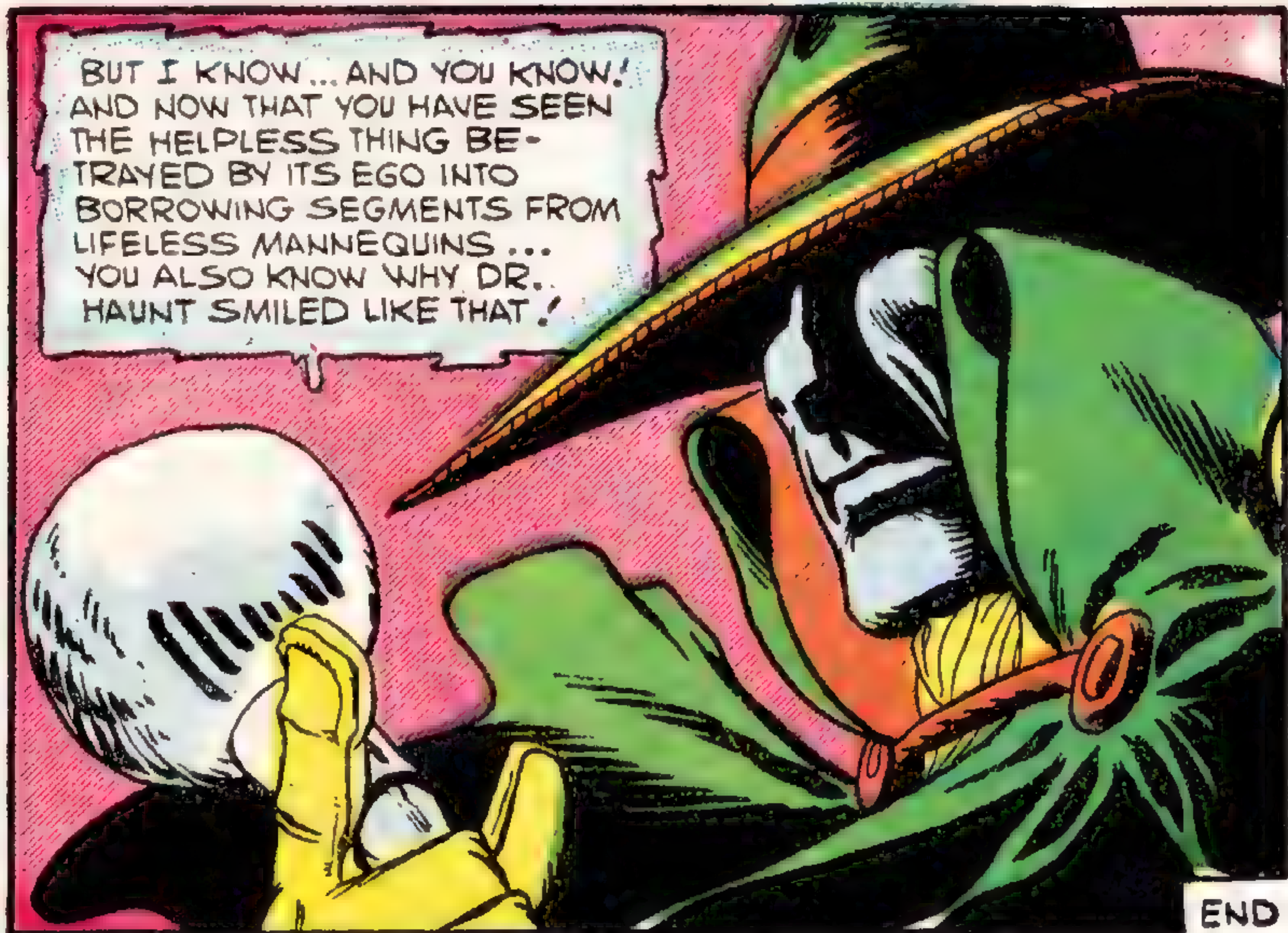
WHAT'S THE MATTER? TAKE A LOOK...



WHERE'D THAT NEW DUMMY COME FROM? AND LOOK AT ALL THE OLD ONES... THEY ALL HAVE DIFFERENT PARTS MISSING!



G-GOSH, BOSS--I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED!



BUT I KNOW... AND YOU KNOW! AND NOW THAT YOU HAVE SEEN THE HELPLESS THING BETRAYED BY ITS EGO INTO BORROWING SEGMENTS FROM LIFELESS MANNEQUINS... YOU ALSO KNOW WHY DR. HAUNT SMILED LIKE THAT!

END

HERE IS NOTHING UNNATURAL OR UNWORLDLY IN THIS TALE OF DR. HAUNT'S ABOUT A MAN WHO WAS HAUNTED BY...

HIS FATE

HE WAS A GREAT SUCCESS! SURELY, YOU REMEMBER THE INCREDIBLY FAST PATTERN BETWEEN DUMMY AND MAN...

WHO WAS THAT BLONDE I SAW YOU WITH LAST NIGHT?

HE WAS THE MOST AMAZING OF ALL VENTRILOQUISTS! PEOPLE KEPT FLOCKING IN TO SEE HIS ACT! SURELY, YOU ARE AMONG THE MILLIONS WHO HAVE SEEN HIM...



61970

Ditko

SURELY, WHILE WATCHING WITH DELIGHTED WONDER, YOU NEVER ONCE DREAMED THAT EVEN WHILE PERFORMING, THIS MAN'S HEART WAS HAUNTED...

THAT WAS NO BLONDE! THAT WAS MY WOODCARVER!

WHAT GOOD IS ALL MY MONEY ?

A man in a blue suit stands on a stage, illuminated by a bright spotlight. He is looking down at a small object in his hands. In the foreground, the silhouettes of an audience are visible, with one person's hand raised. A red curtain is partially visible behind the man. The scene is set in a theater or auditorium.

A comic book illustration of a villainous character. The character has a large, green, wide-brimmed hat with a red band. He has a pale, somewhat skeletal face with dark, hollow eyes and a wide, toothy grin. He is wearing a red and yellow striped shirt. To his right is a small, skeletal figure with a white skull and a yellow body. The background is a dark, rocky landscape with a large, jagged rock formation on the left. The style is typical of classic comic book art, with bold lines and a limited color palette.

BUT ALSO...
MORE
HEART-
BREAK...

THEY ALL GO HOME AFTER THE SHOW! THEY SIT DOWN TO A MEAL WITH THEIR FAMILIES, AND THEY LAUGH! BUT I'M ALWAYS ALONE! EVERY NIGHT, (sob) ALONE!

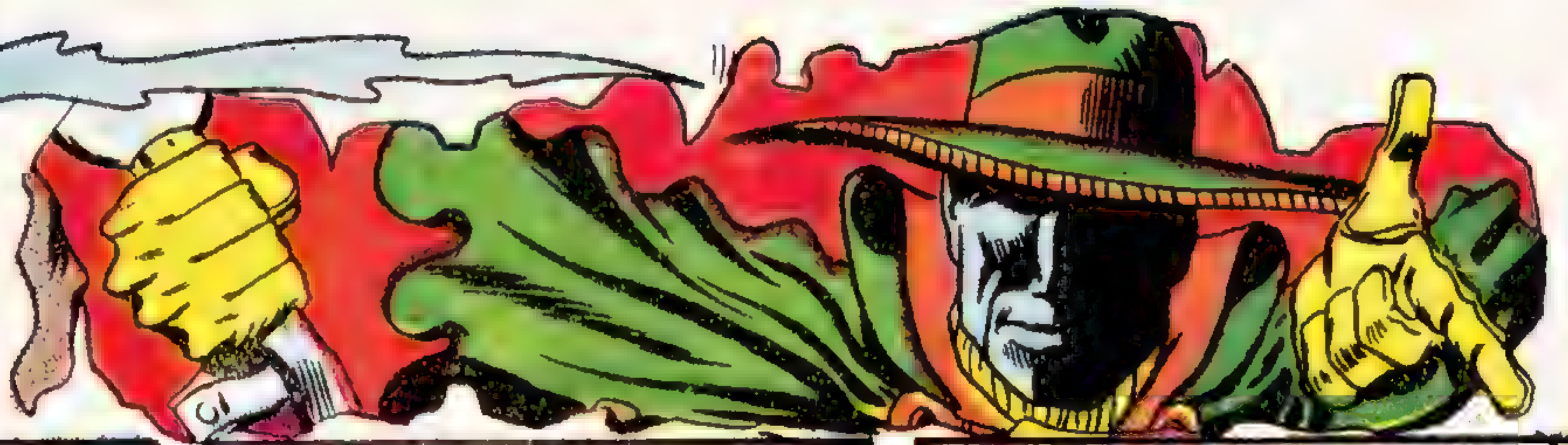
NIP & TUCK

COULD IT BE THAT SHE
KEEPS COMING BACK
TO SEE **ME** ?
COULD IT... ?



2

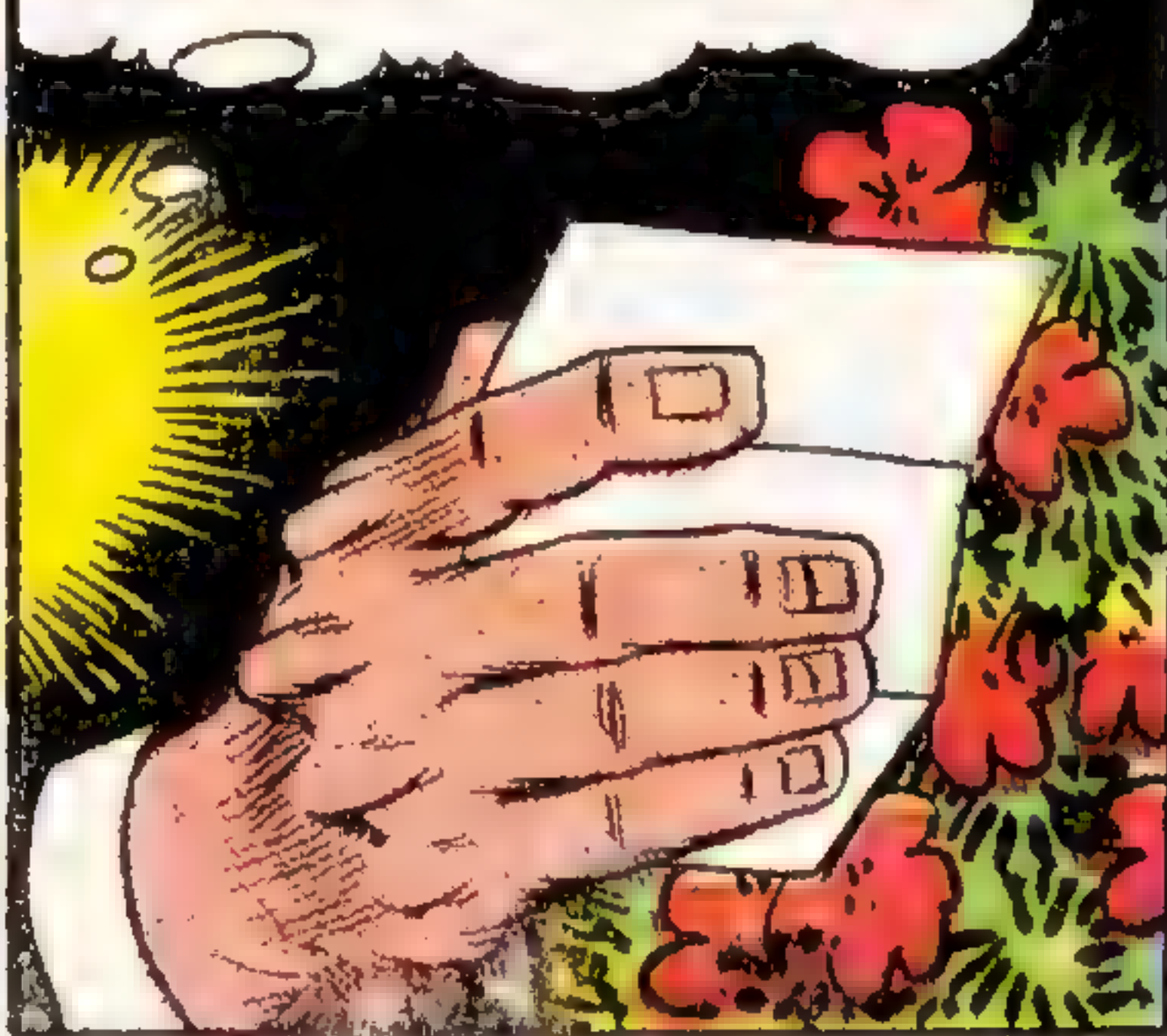
BUT HE QUICKLY DOUSED THE SPURT OF HOPE WITH A BITTER LAUGH! ONLY TO HAVE IT REKINDLED THAT SAME EVENING...



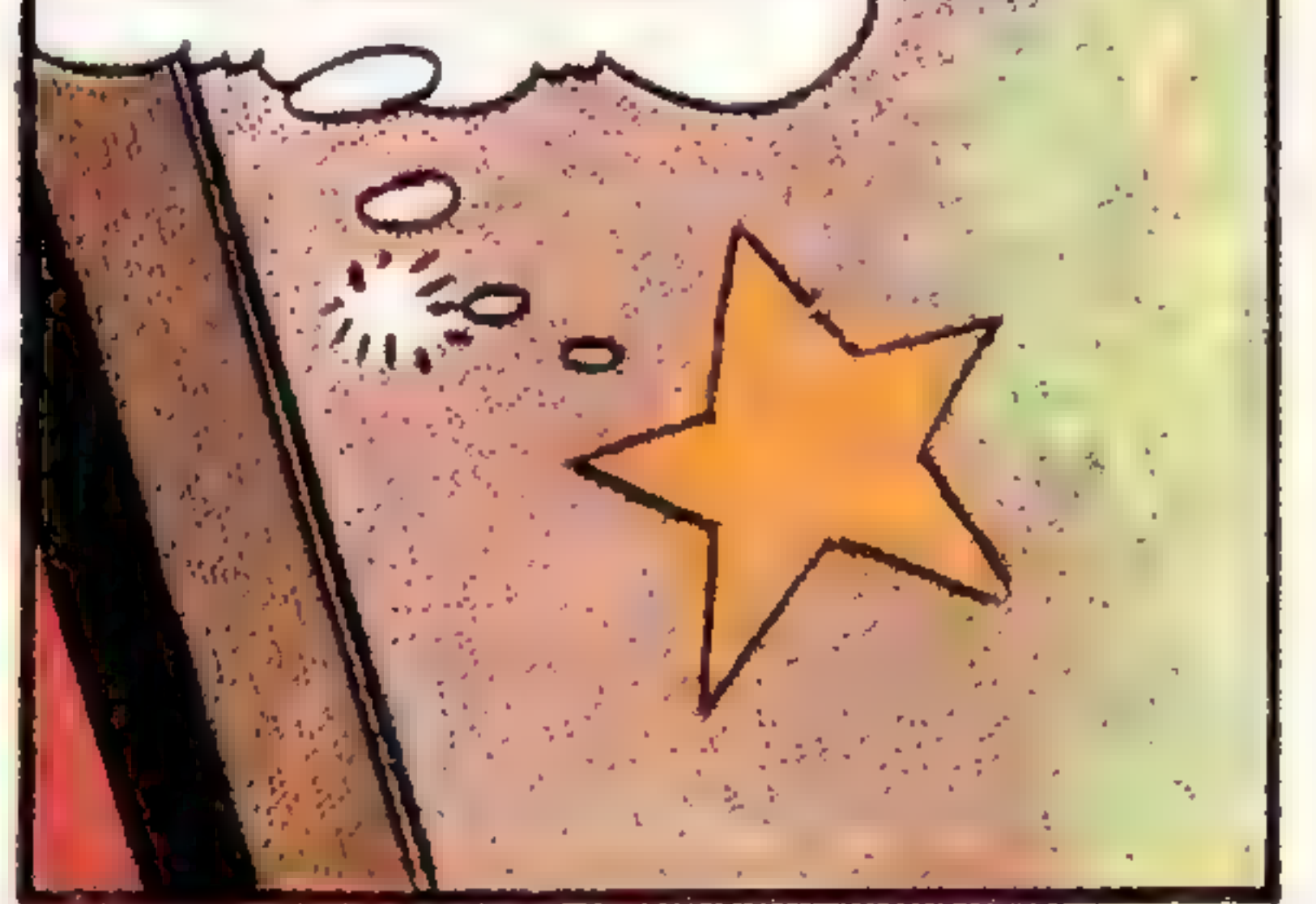
GOT A NOTE FOR YOU! AND SOME FLOWERS!



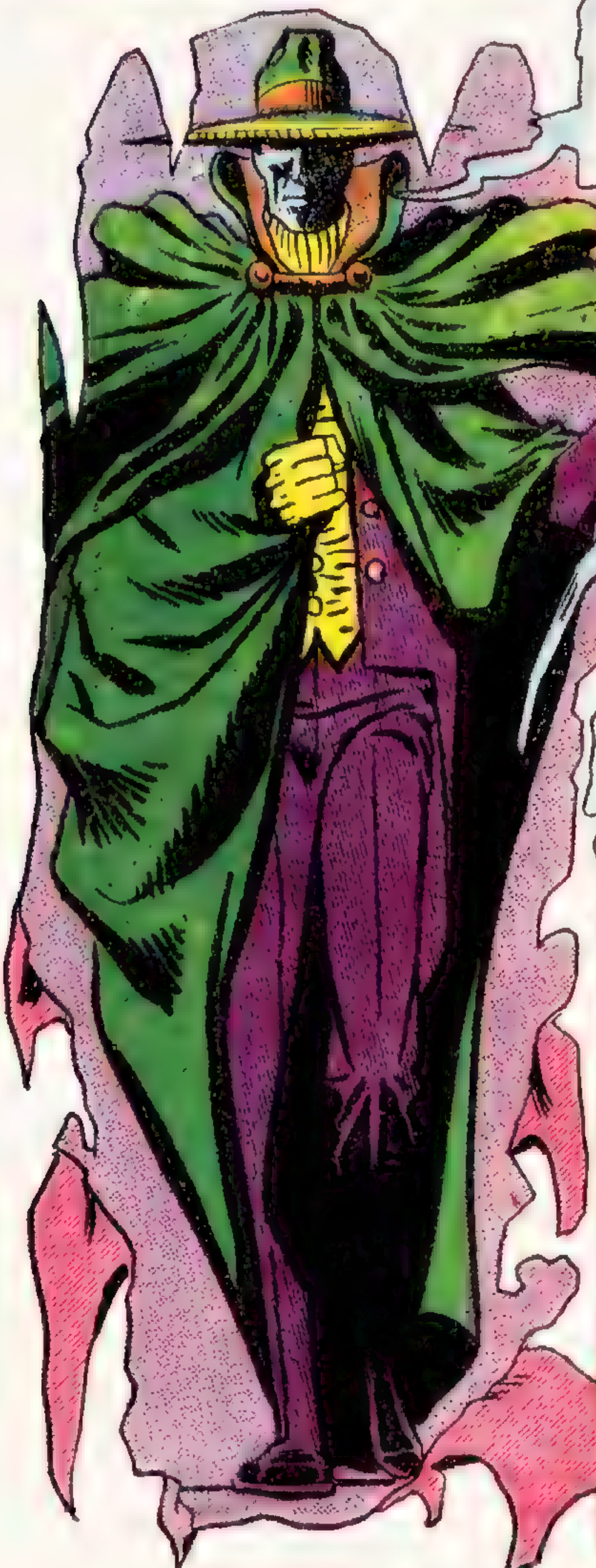
IT'S FROM HER! SHE SAYS SHE L-LOVES ME!



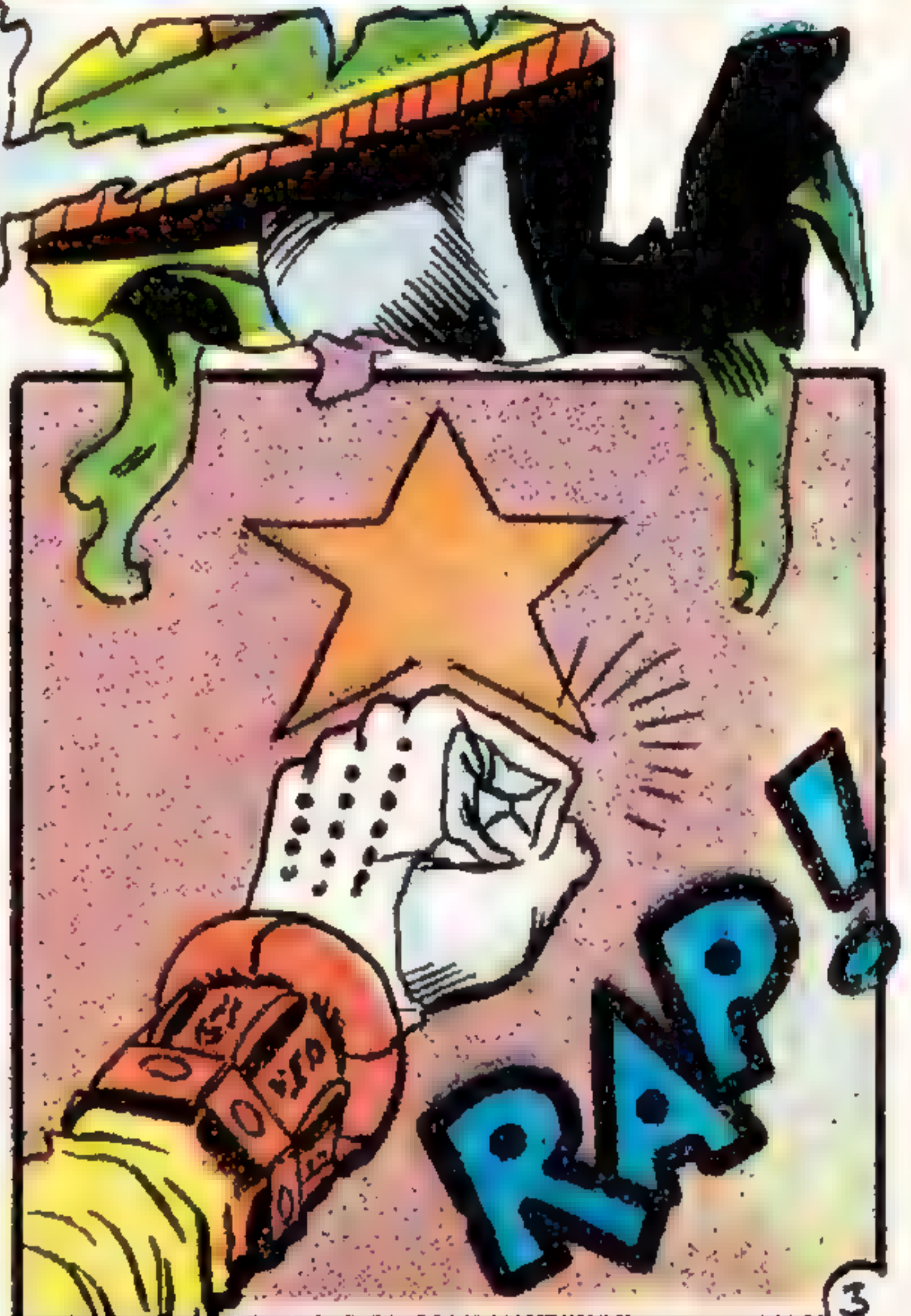
SH-SHE WANTS TO SEE ME! SHE'S COMING HERE TO THE DRESSING ROOM RIGHT AFTER THE NEXT PERFORMANCE!



WAS IT ANY WONDER THAT HE GAVE THE BEST PERFORMANCE OF HIS LIFE AFTER HAVING RECEIVED THAT NOTE?



AND NOW HE WAS BACK IN HIS DRESSING ROOM, NERVOUSLY PACING THE FLOOR, WAITING FOR...



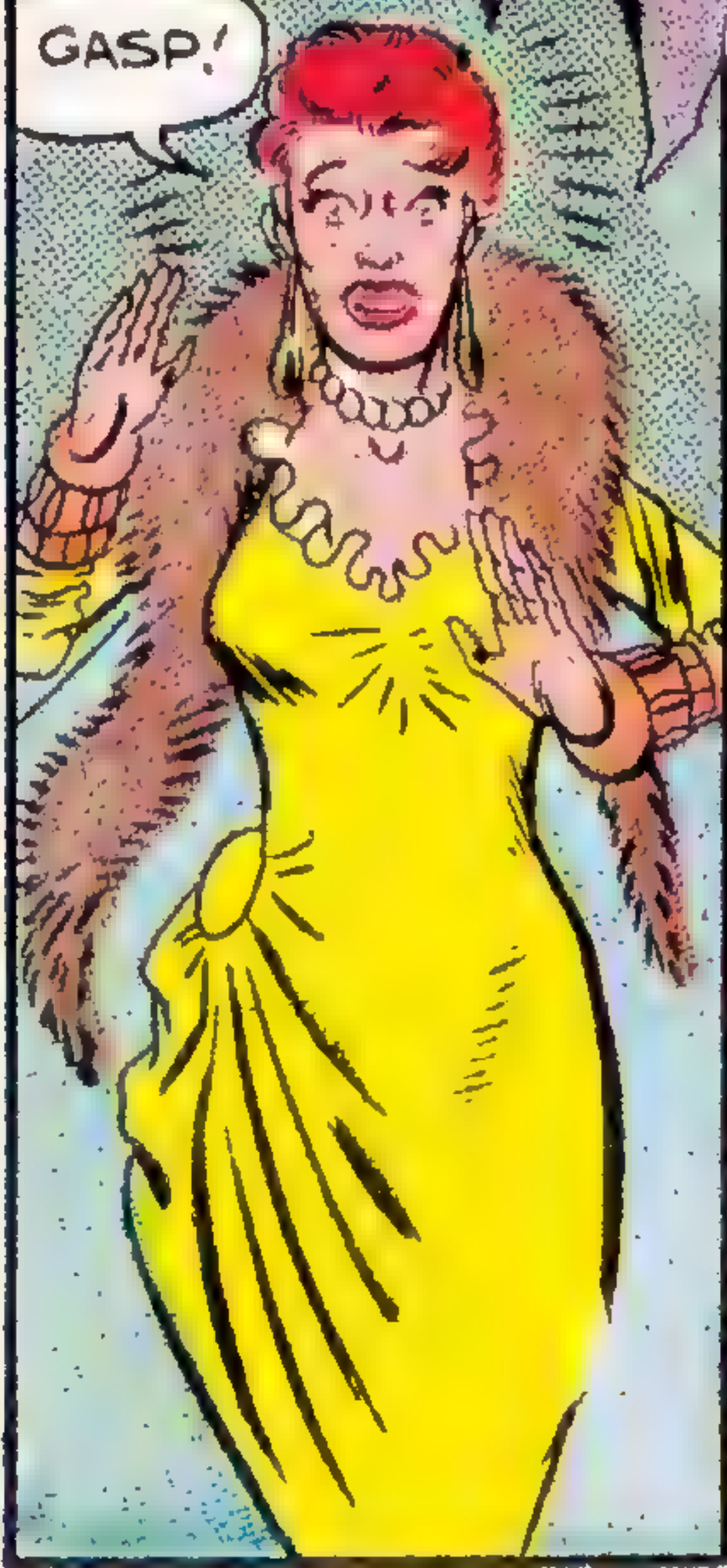
HE RAN TO THE DOOR,
FLUNG IT OPEN, AND
STOOD THERE WITH
WIDESPREAD ARMS...



...BUT SHE ONLY
STARED, HER FACE
CONTORTING WITH
SHOCK.



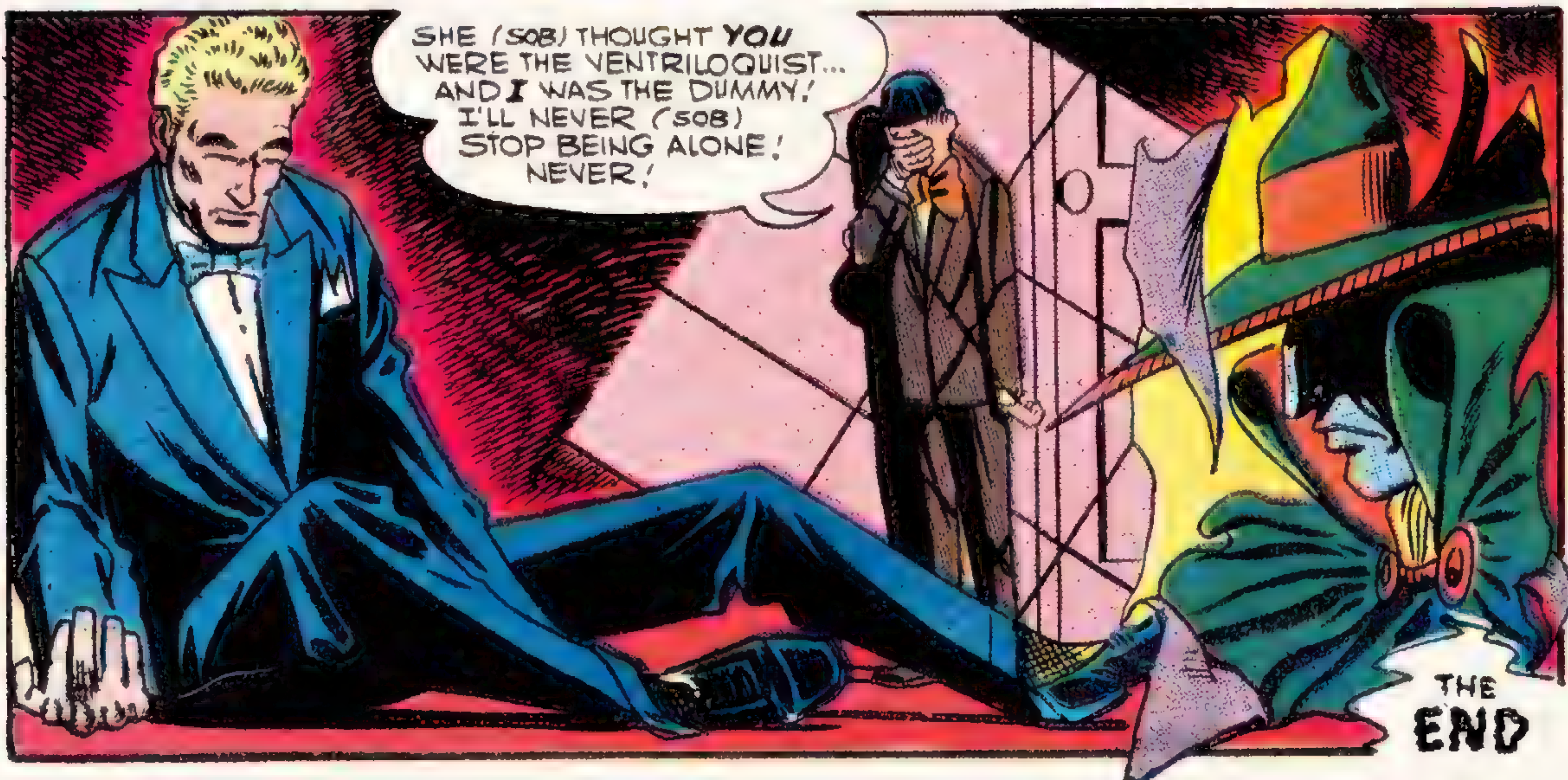
GASP!



AND THEN THE SHOCK
DISSOLVED INTO
LAUGHTER! CRUEL
LAUGHTER THAT KEPT
SWELLING UNCON-
TROLLABLY LOUDER AND
LOUDER UNTIL THE
TEARS ROLLED DOWN
HER SHAKING
CHEEKS...



...AND EVEN CONTIN-
UED AFTER HE HAD
SLAMMED THE DOOR
SHUT, AND STUMBLED
BROKENLY BACK IN-
TO THE ROOM...



SHE (SOB) THOUGHT YOU
WERE THE VENTRILOQUIST...
AND I WAS THE DUMMY!
I'LL NEVER (SOB)
STOP BEING ALONE!
NEVER!

THE
END

The MESSAGES

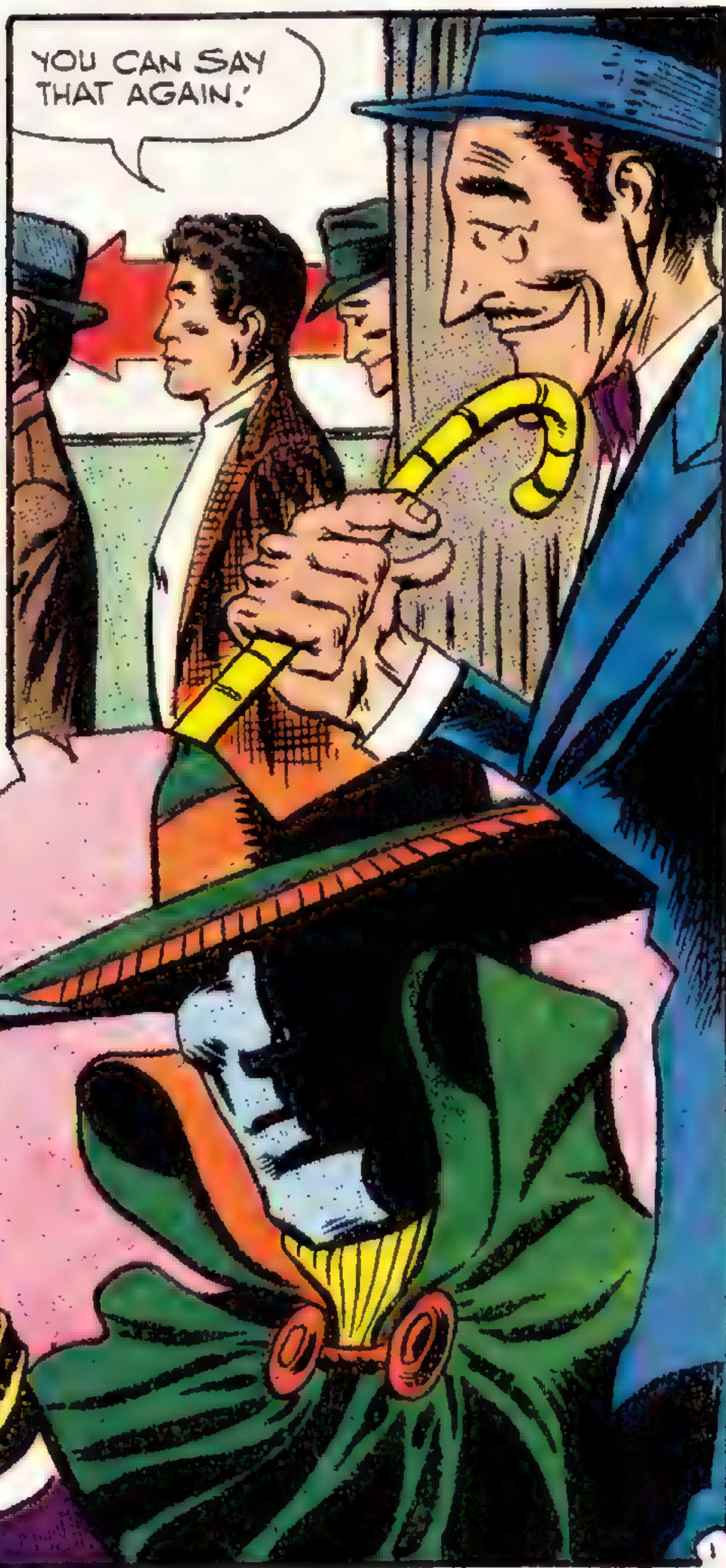
COME AND SEE IT! THE MOST AMAZING, ASTOUNDING, INCREDIBLE ATTRACTION EVER TO BE PRESENTED ANYWHERE! COME AND SEE THE TINY PEOPLE OF DR. DIABALO!

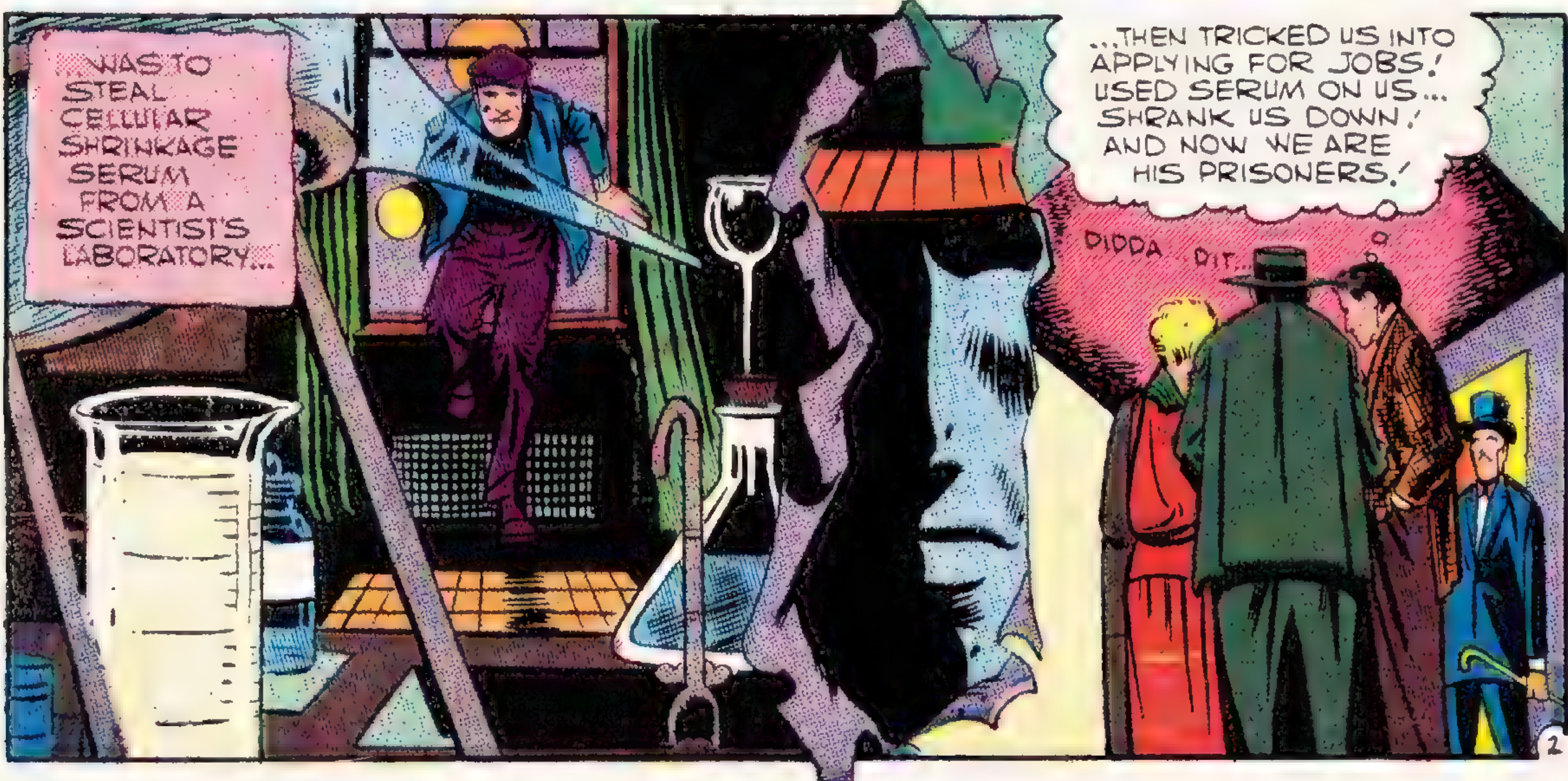
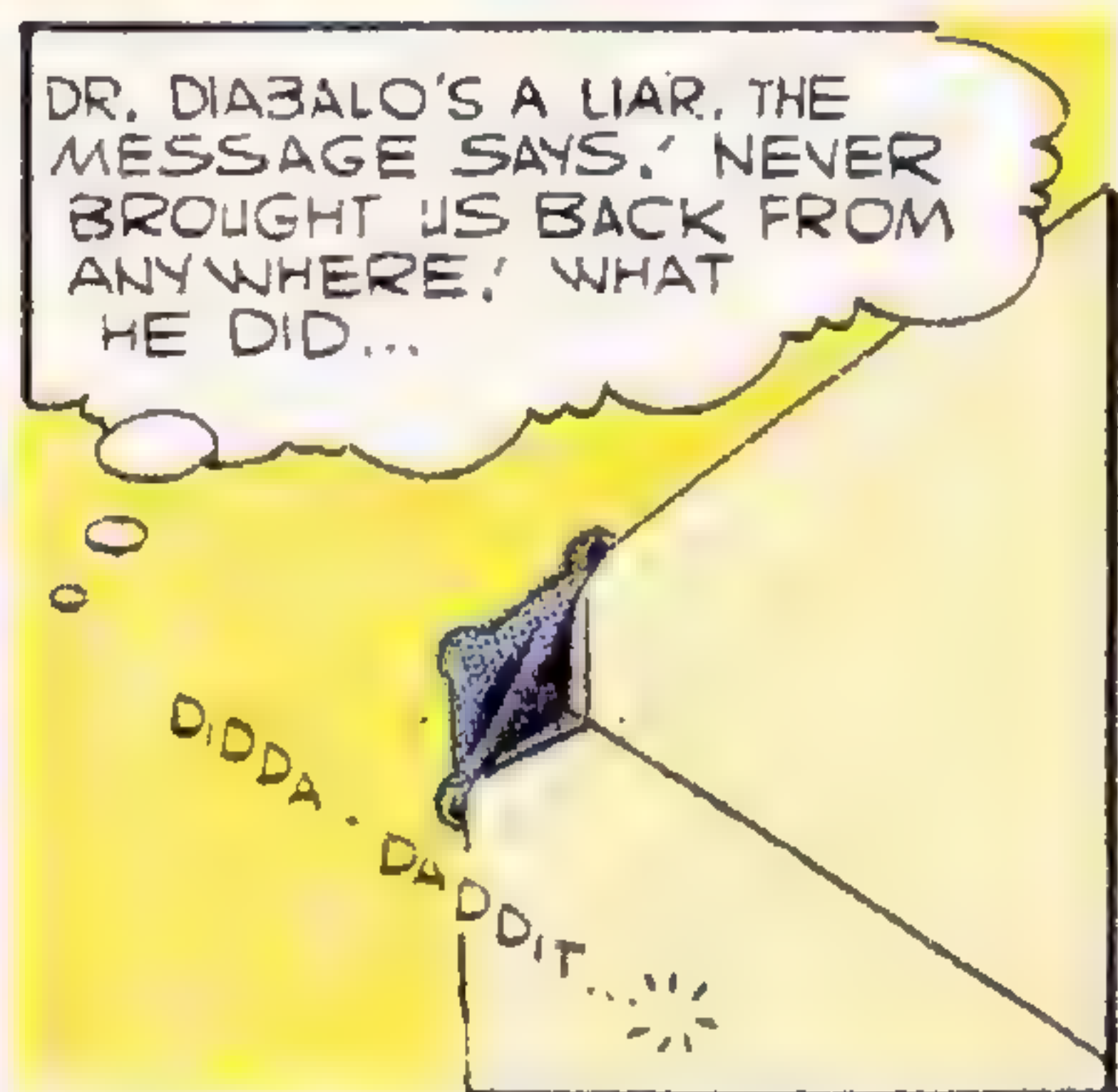
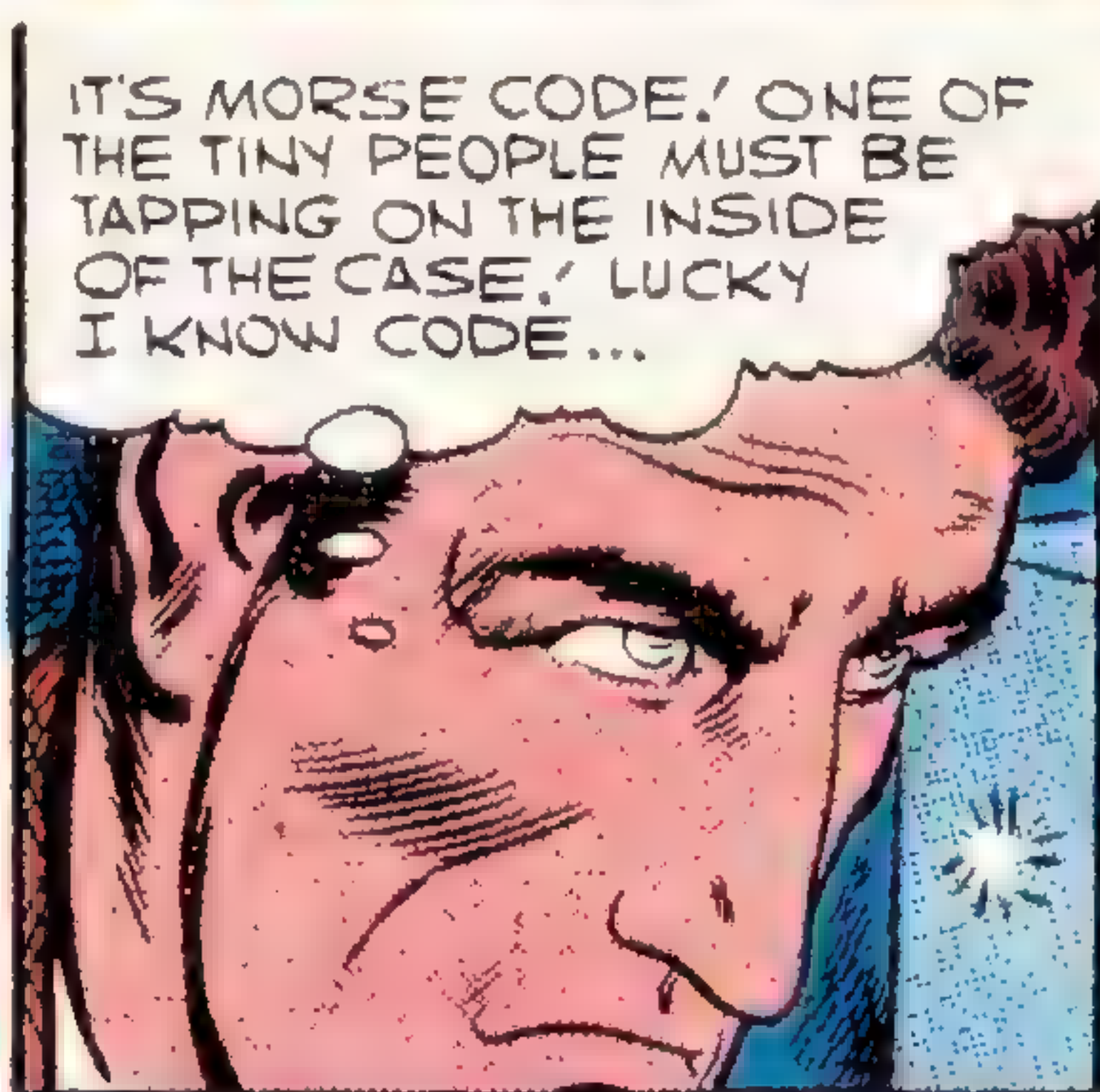


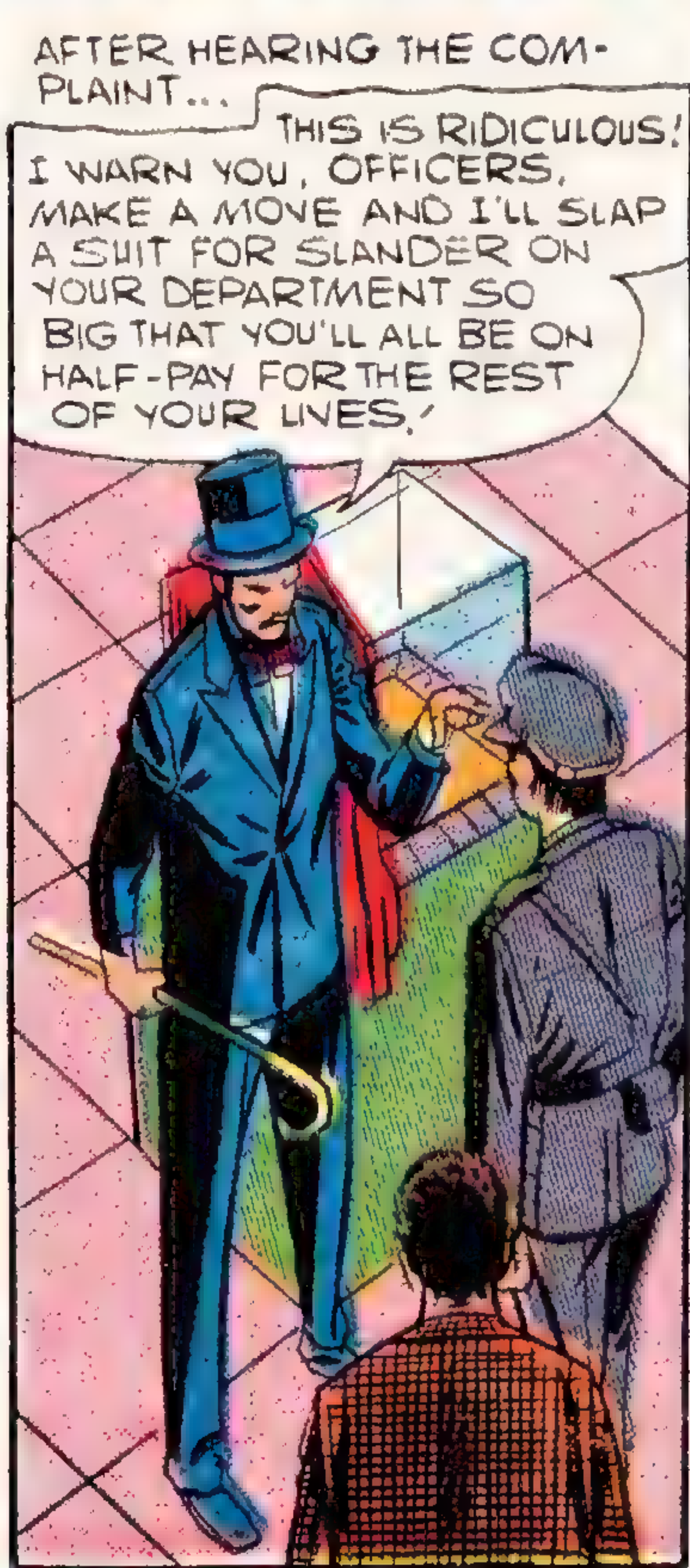
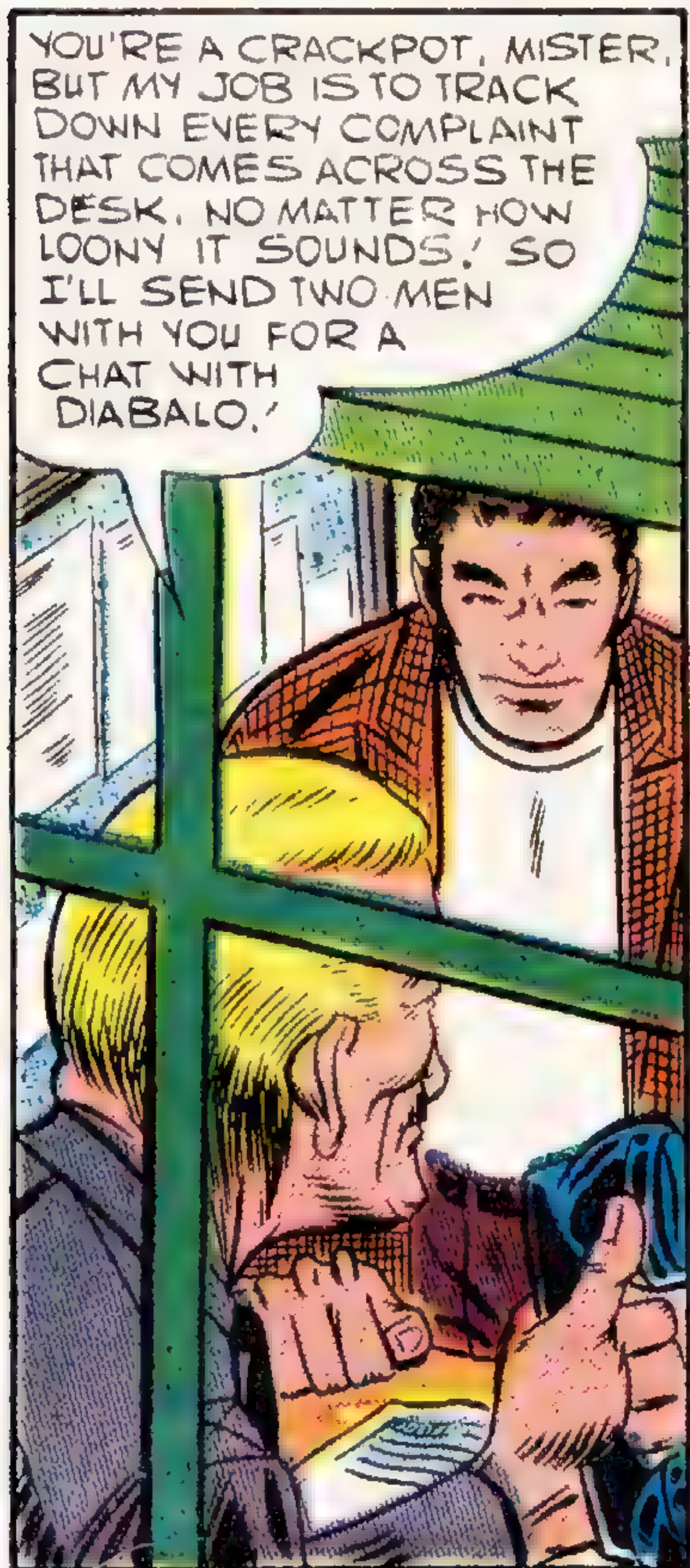
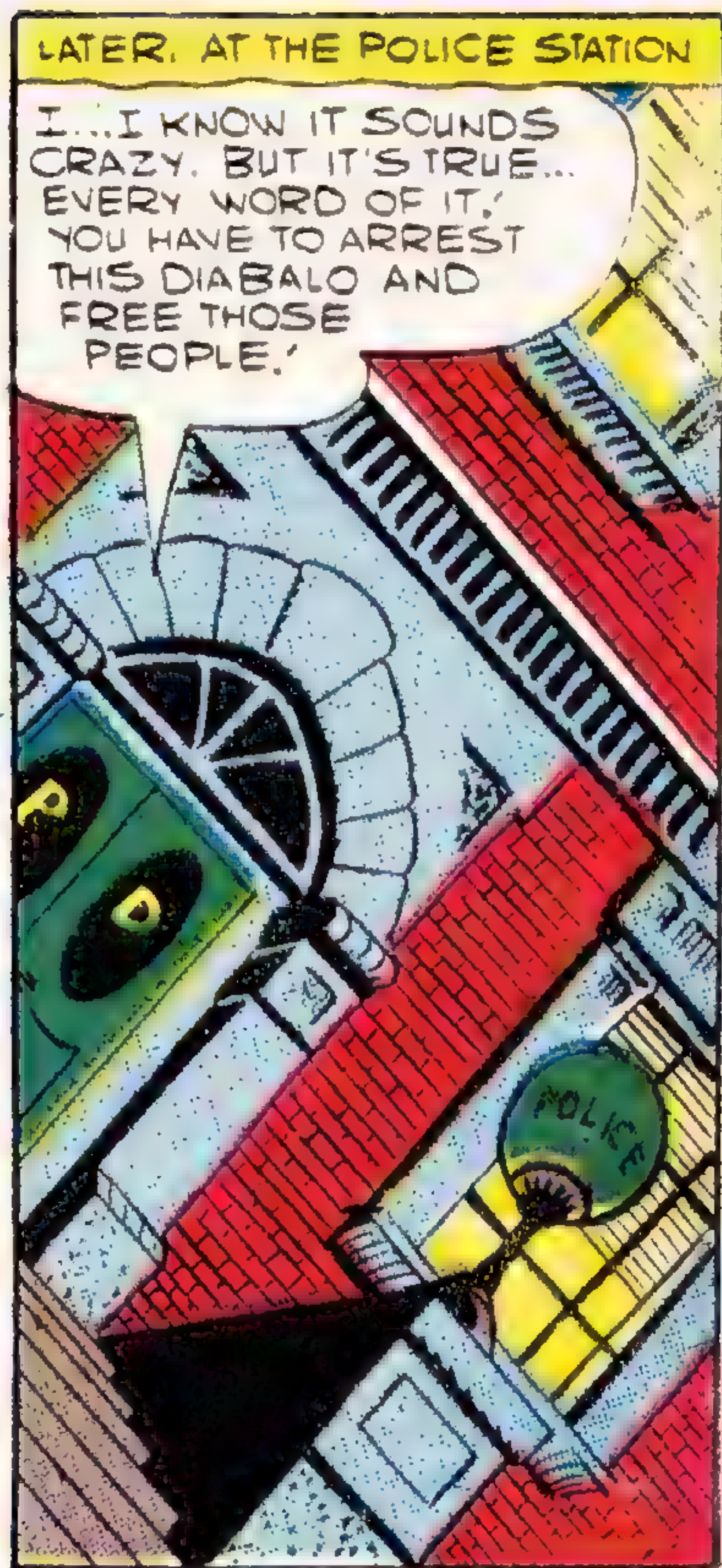
THIS BETTER NOT BE A FAKE! WE'VE SHELLED OUT A DOLLAR APIECE FOR THESE TICKETS!

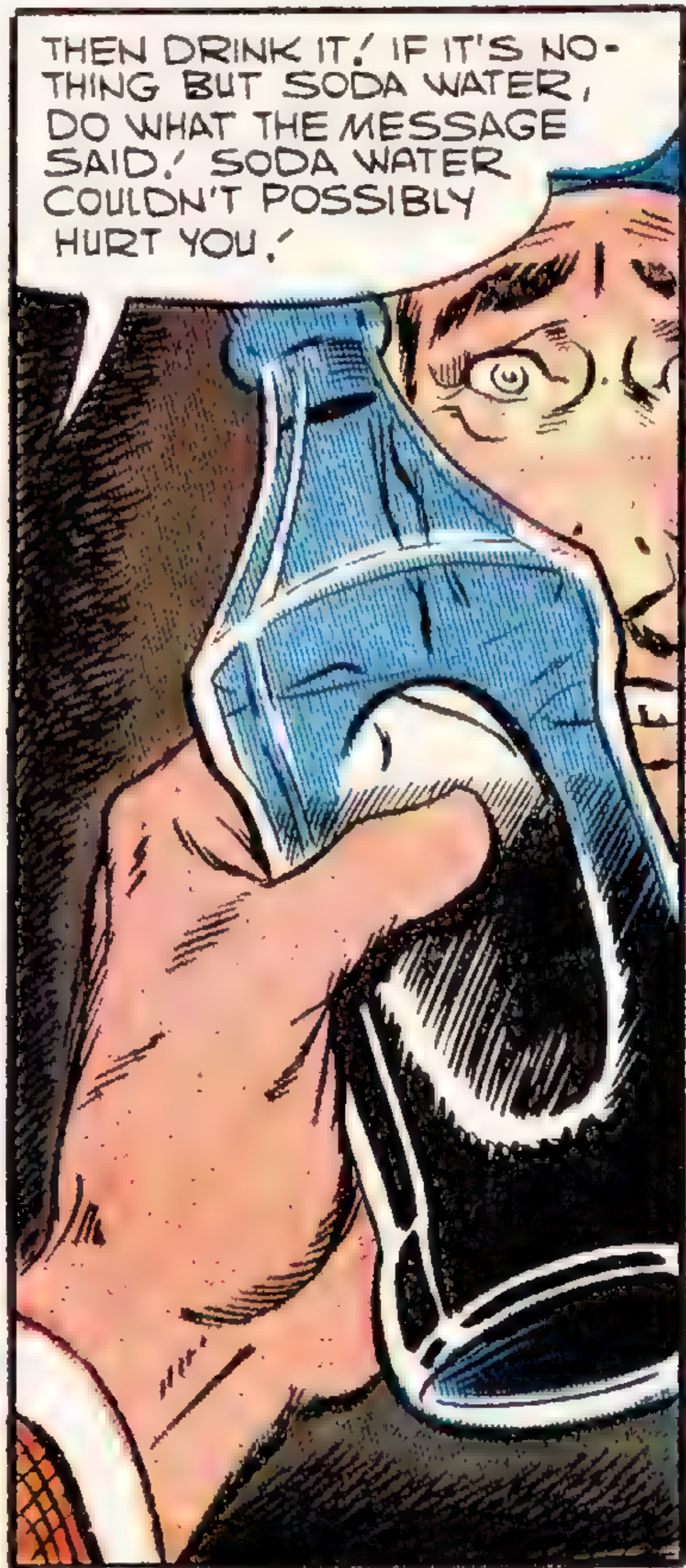
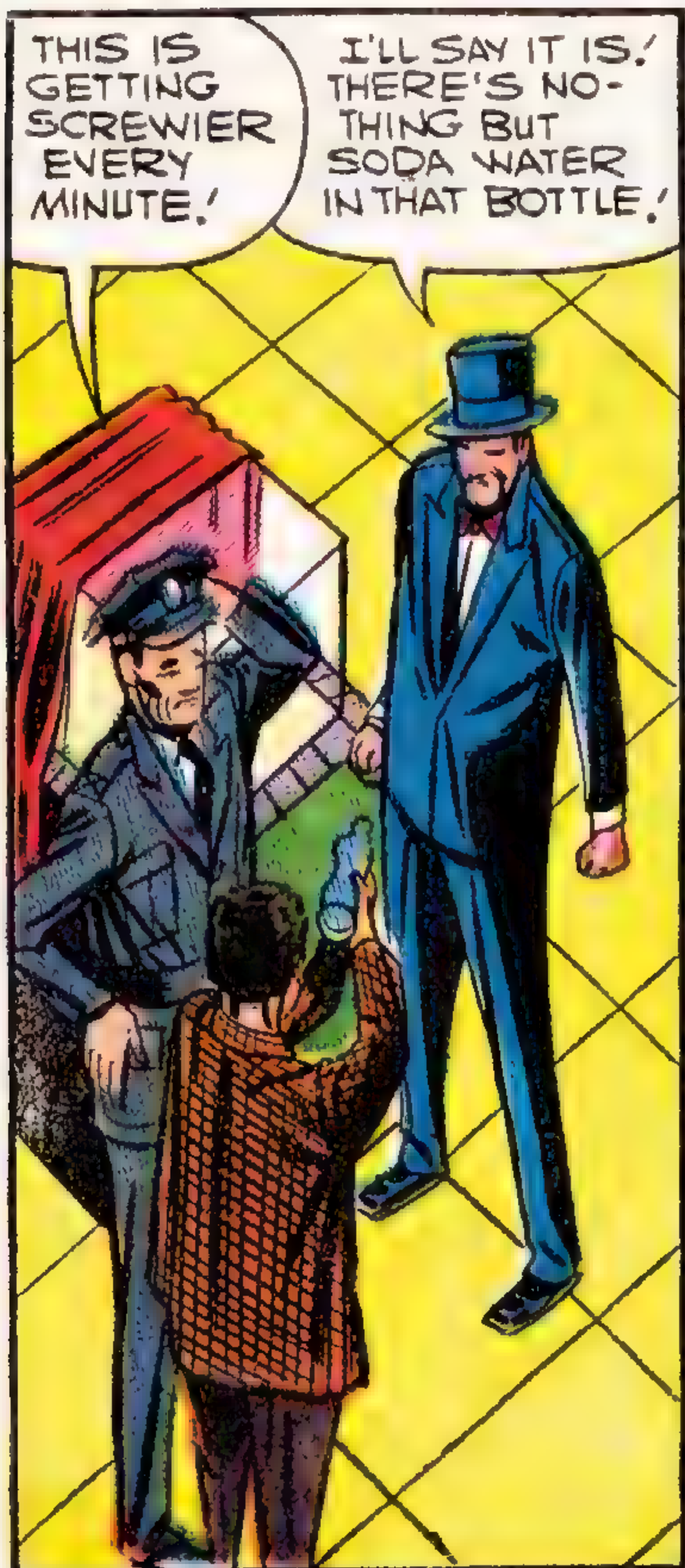
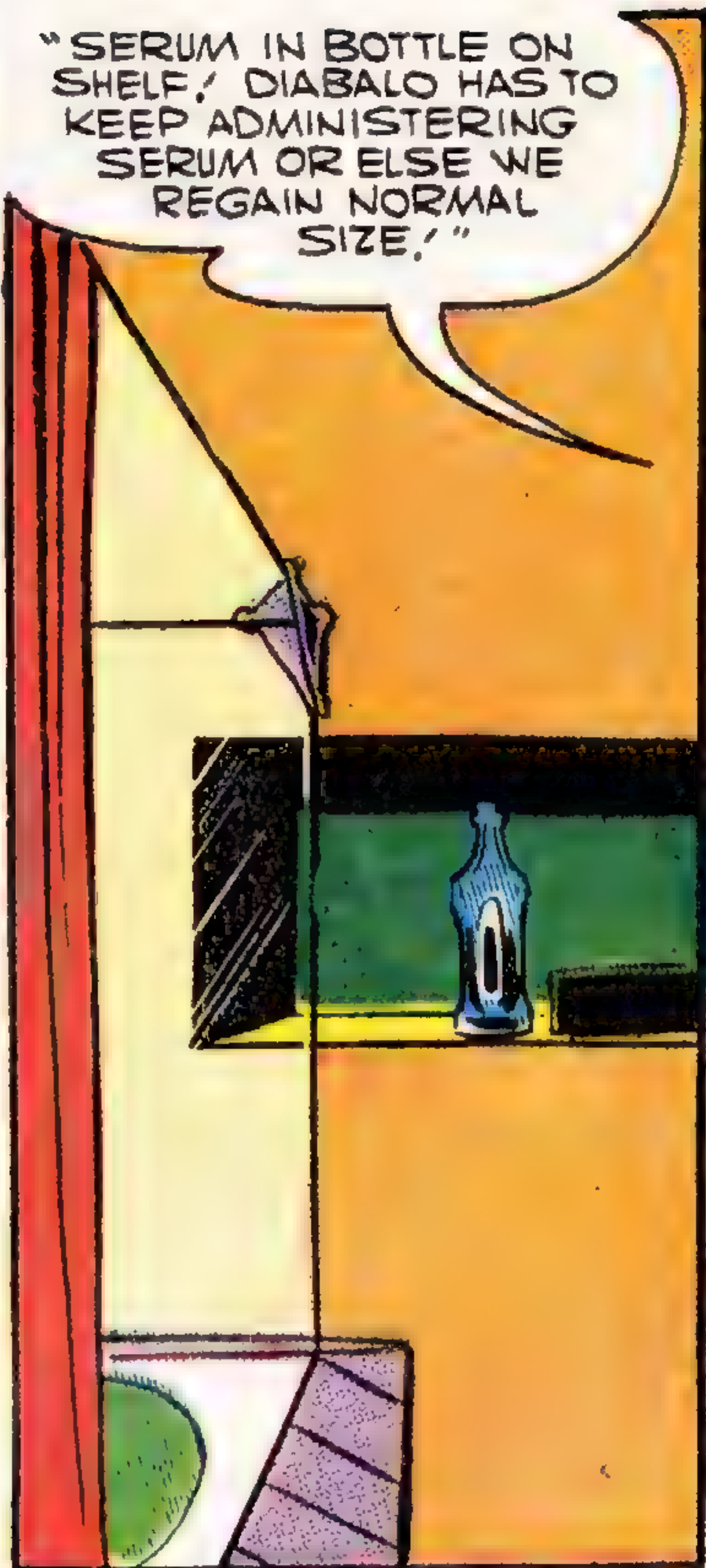
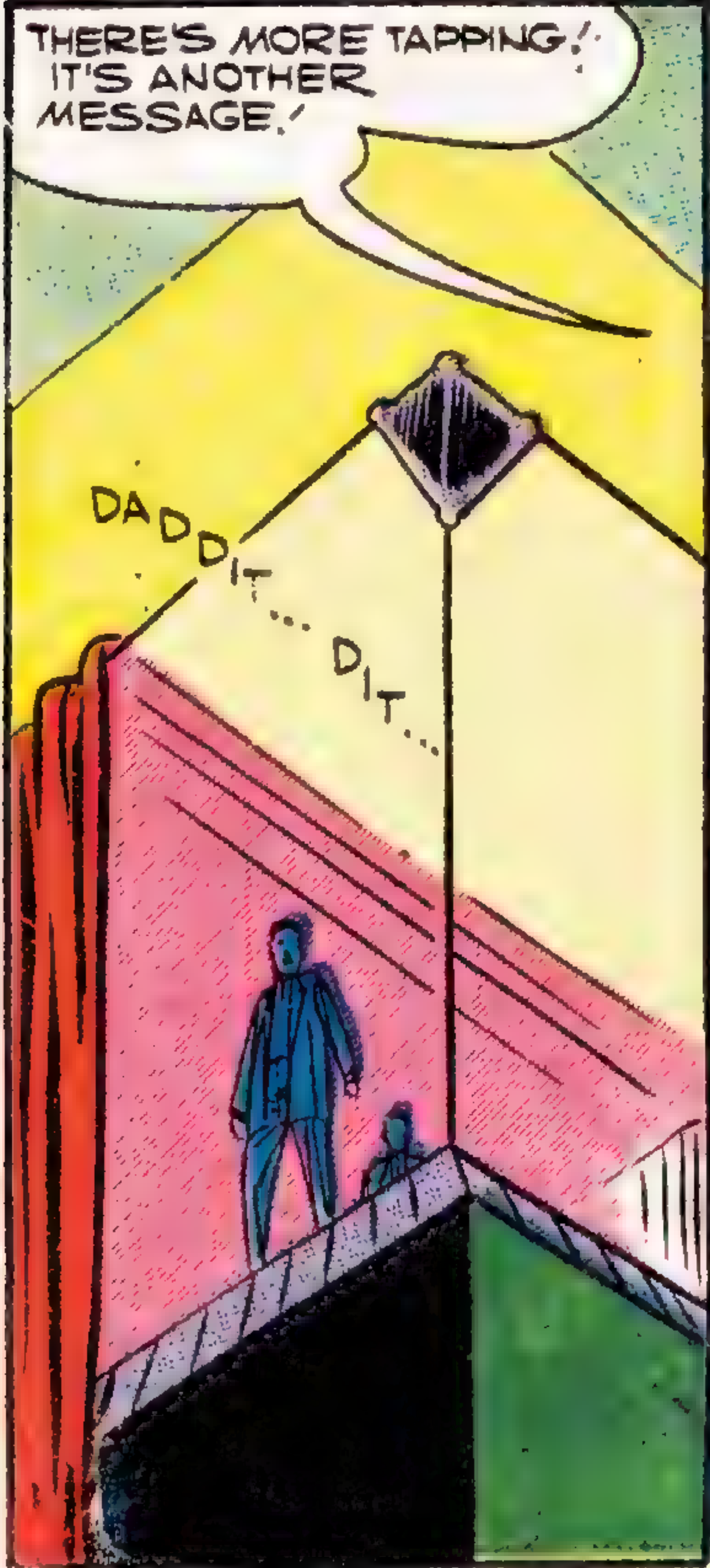


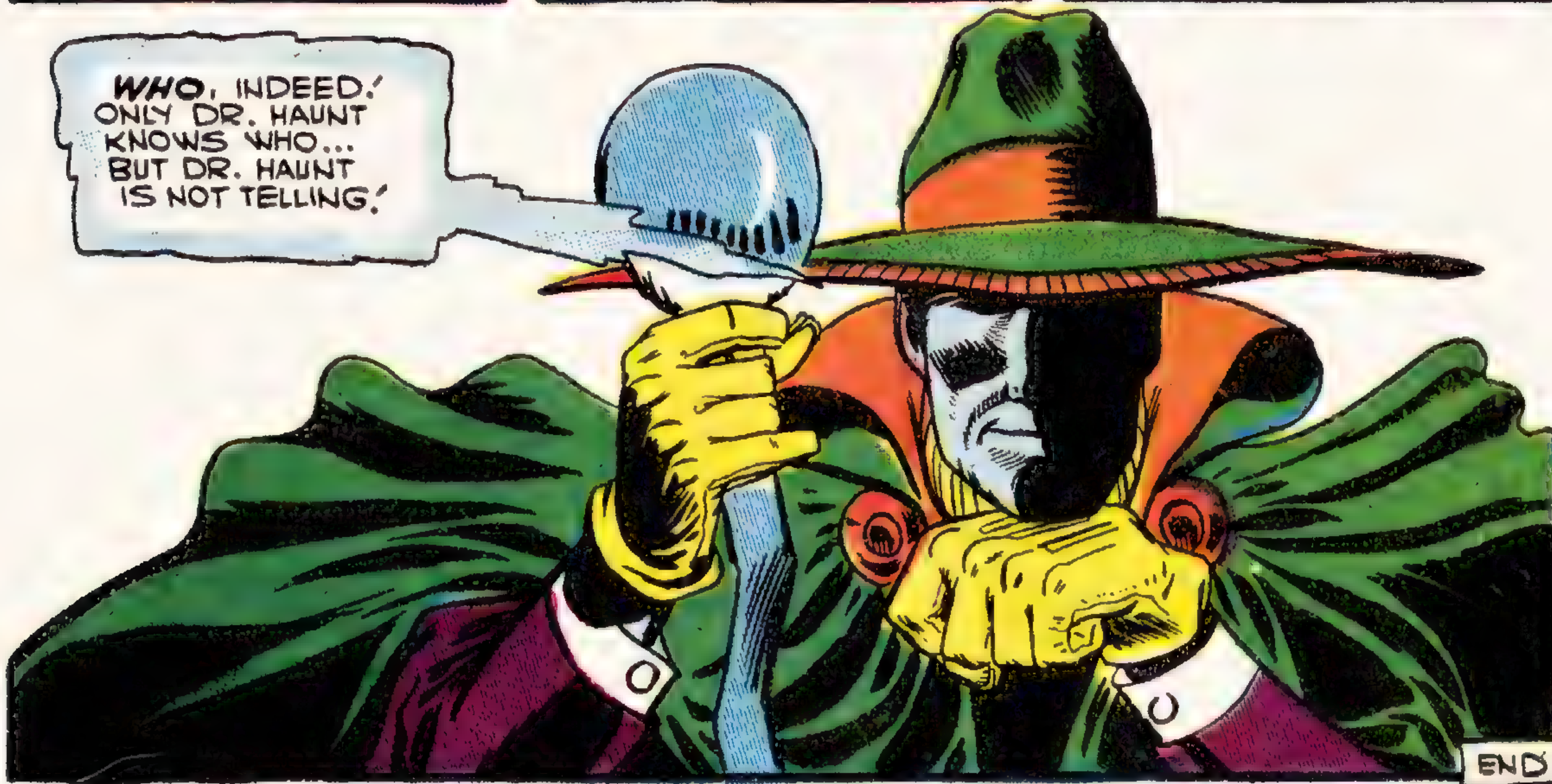
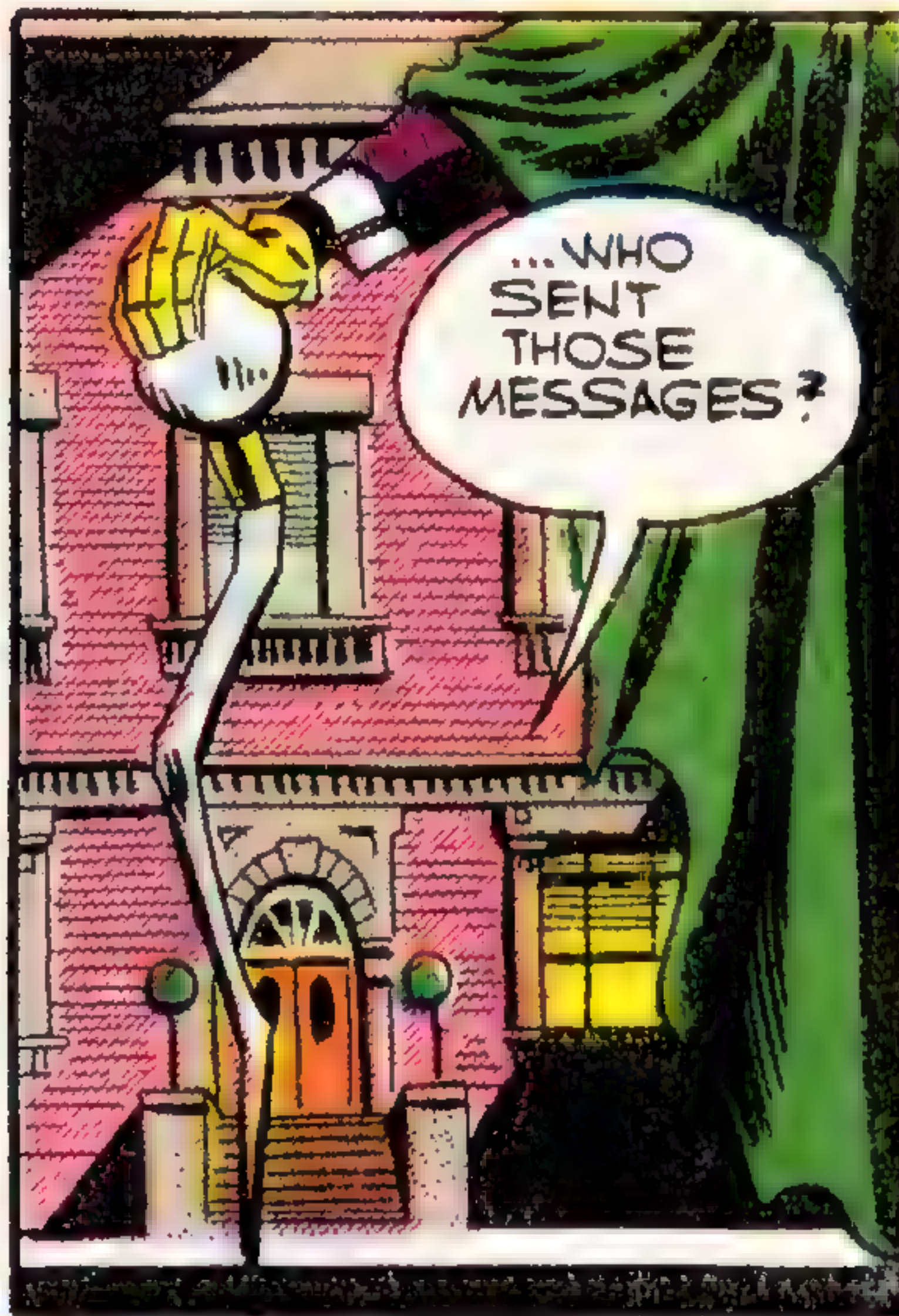
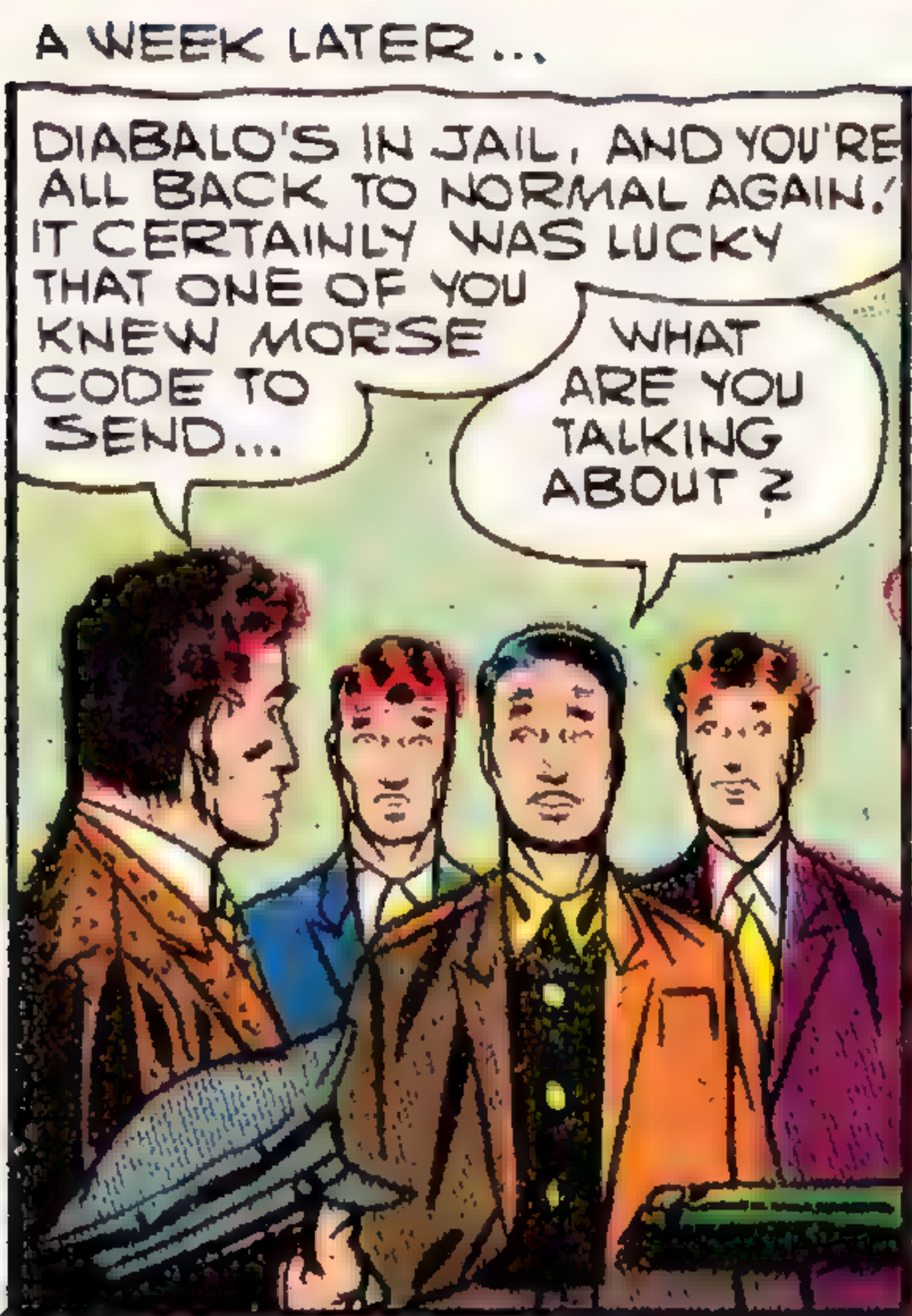
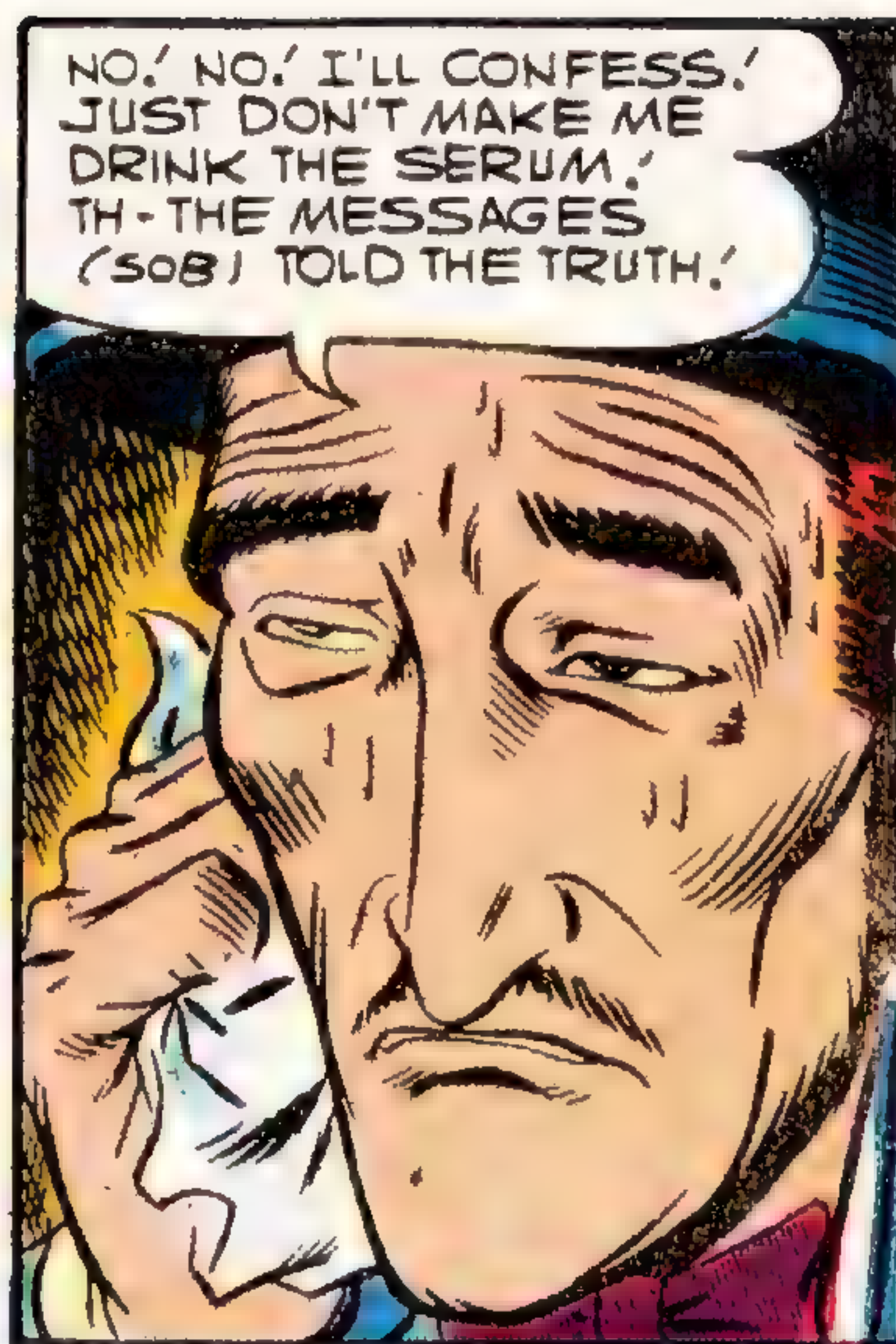
YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN!













THIS MAGAZINE IS HAUNTED

Vol. 2
No. 13

THIS MAGAZINE IS

HAUNTED

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE



AUTHORITY

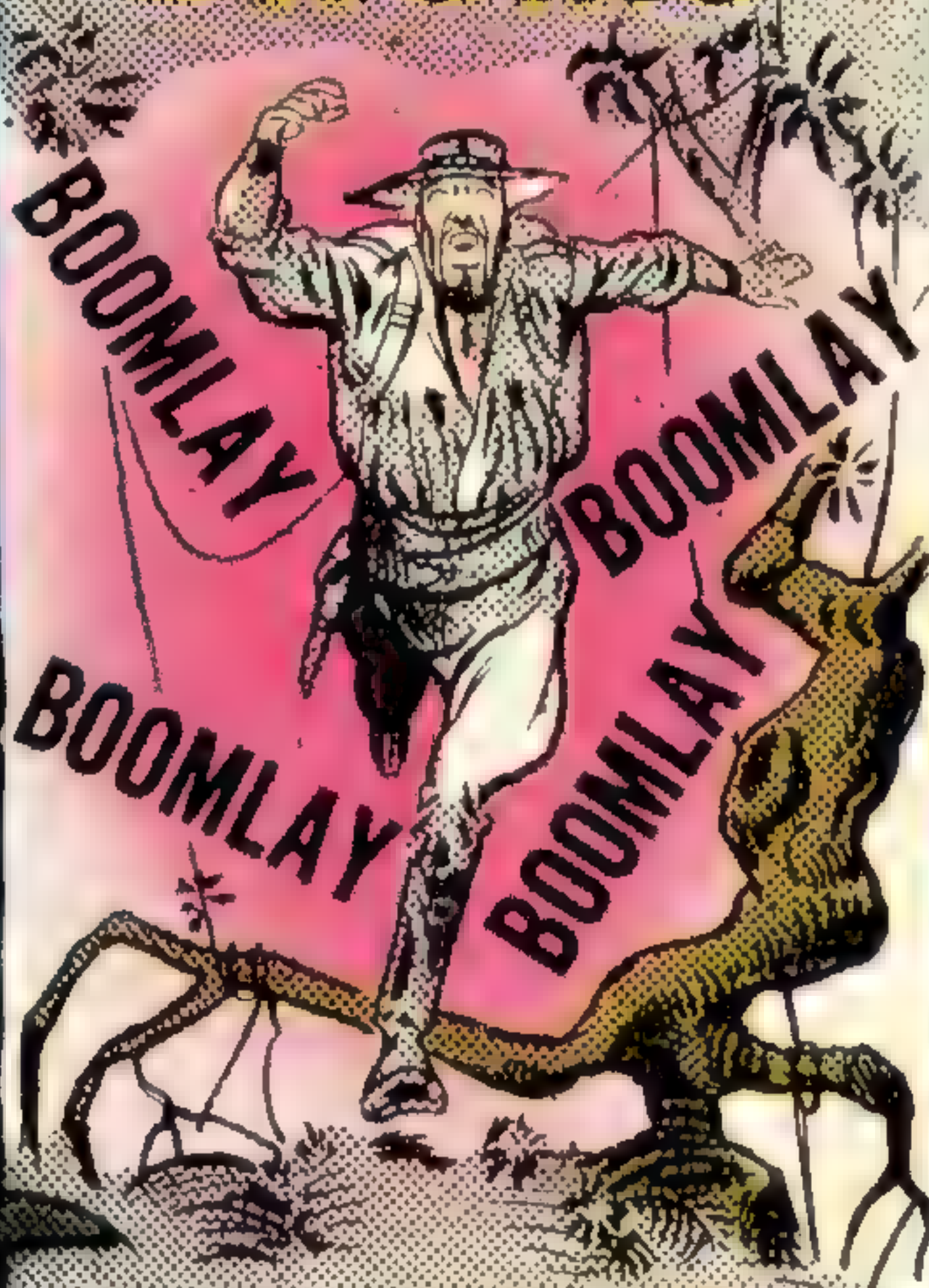
10¢

A CHARLTON PUBLICATION

HE SHALL HAVE
VENGEANCE

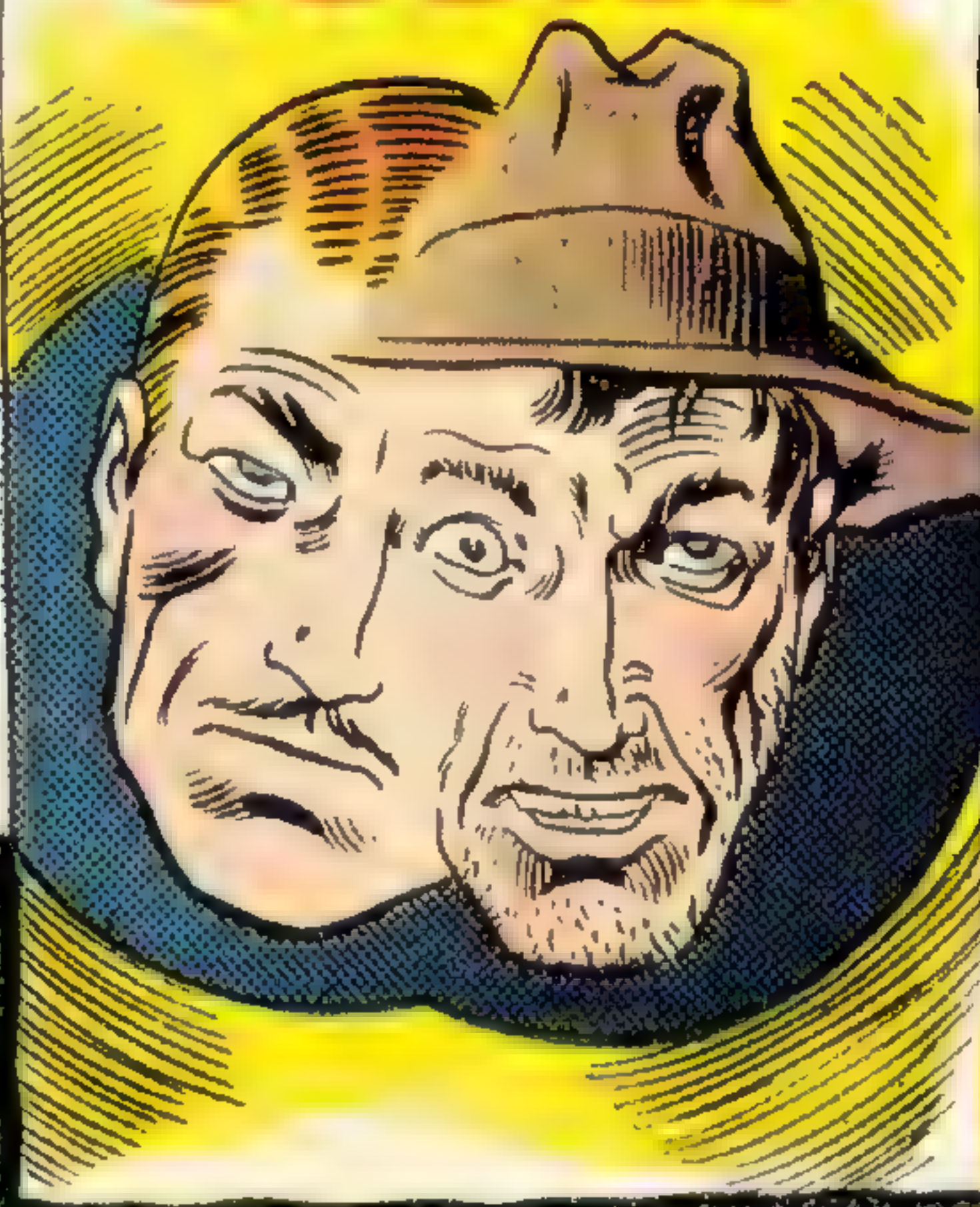


DRUMS



Ditto

THE MAN WHO CHANGED
BODIES



DR. HAUNT WOULD NEVER DECEIVE YOU... I THEREFORE ANNOUNCE NOW THAT I AM NOT THE TELLER OF THIS TALE! WHEN YOU COME TO THE END, YOU SHALL SEE... HEH, HEH, HEH... HOW DEVOID DR. HAUNT IS OF DECEIT!

MENACE OF THE

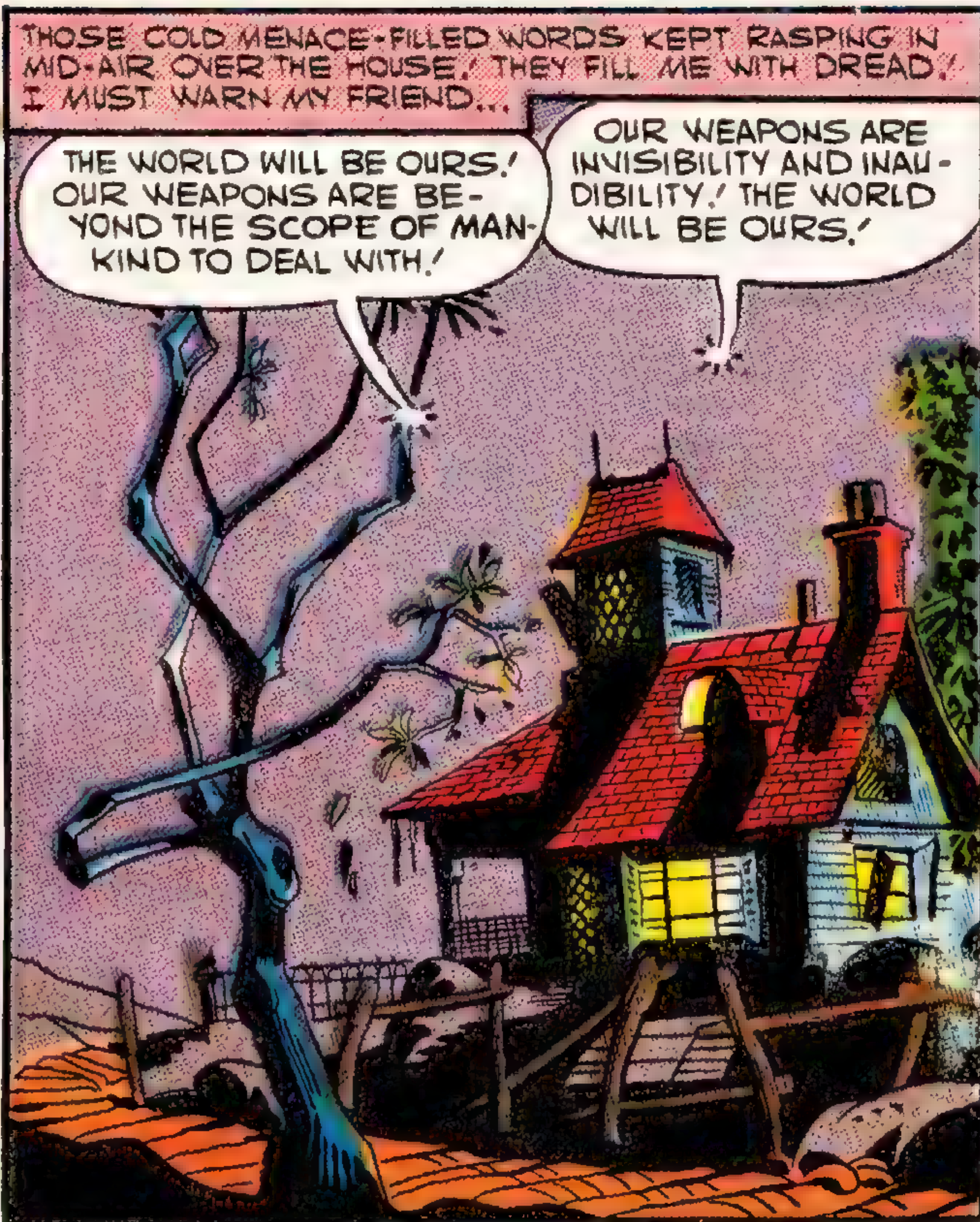
INVISIBLES



THOSE COLD MENACE-FILLED WORDS KEPT RASPING IN MID-AIR OVER THE HOUSE. THEY FILL ME WITH DREAD! I MUST WARN MY FRIEND...

THE WORLD WILL BE OURS! OUR WEAPONS ARE BEYOND THE SCOPE OF MANKIND TO DEAL WITH!

OUR WEAPONS ARE INVISIBILITY AND INAUDIBILITY! THE WORLD WILL BE OURS!



BUT WHEN I WARN HIM, MY FRIEND IS UNRESPONSIVE! HE CANNOT HEAR THEM AS I CAN! SO AFTER A CURSORY GLANCE ABOUT, HE SHRUGS AND TURNS BACK TO HIS WORK...



DITKO

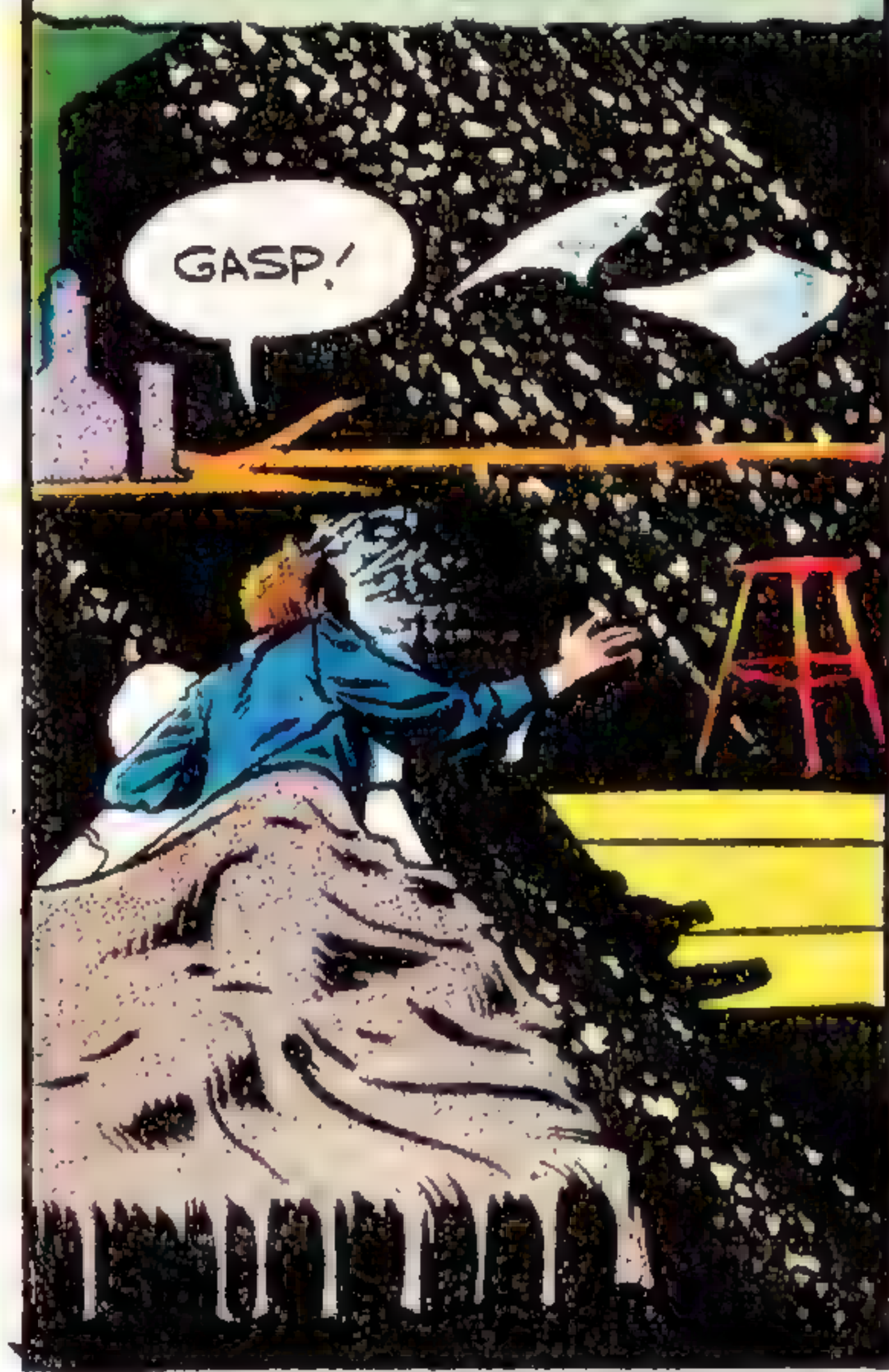
NIGHT HAS FALLEN! MY FRIEND SLEEPS EXHAUSTEDLY BESIDE HIS WORKBENCH. I TRY TO SLEEP TOO, BUT THOSE VOICES KEEP RASPING -- THEY COME CLOSER AND CLOSER...



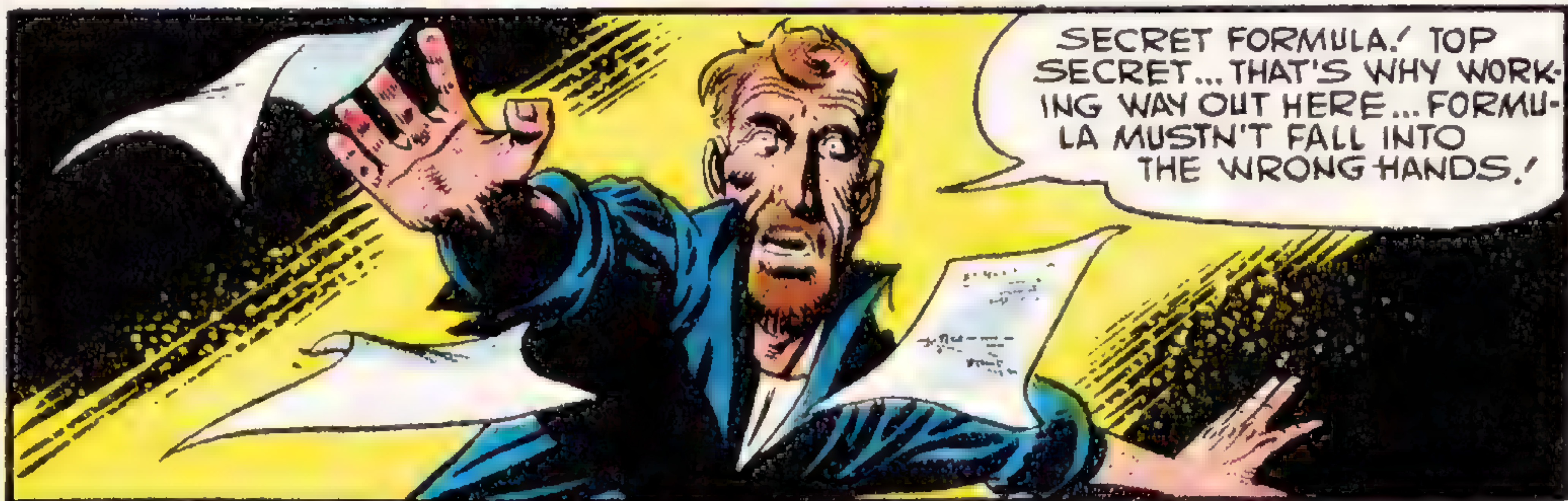
AND NOW MY EYES BULGE FROM THEIR SOCKETS WITH AMAZEMENT AS I SEE MY FRIEND'S PAPERS RISE SLOWLY OFF HIS WORK BENCH AND MOVE THROUGH EMPTY AIR ACROSS THE ROOM, GRASPED BY INVISIBLE HANDS...



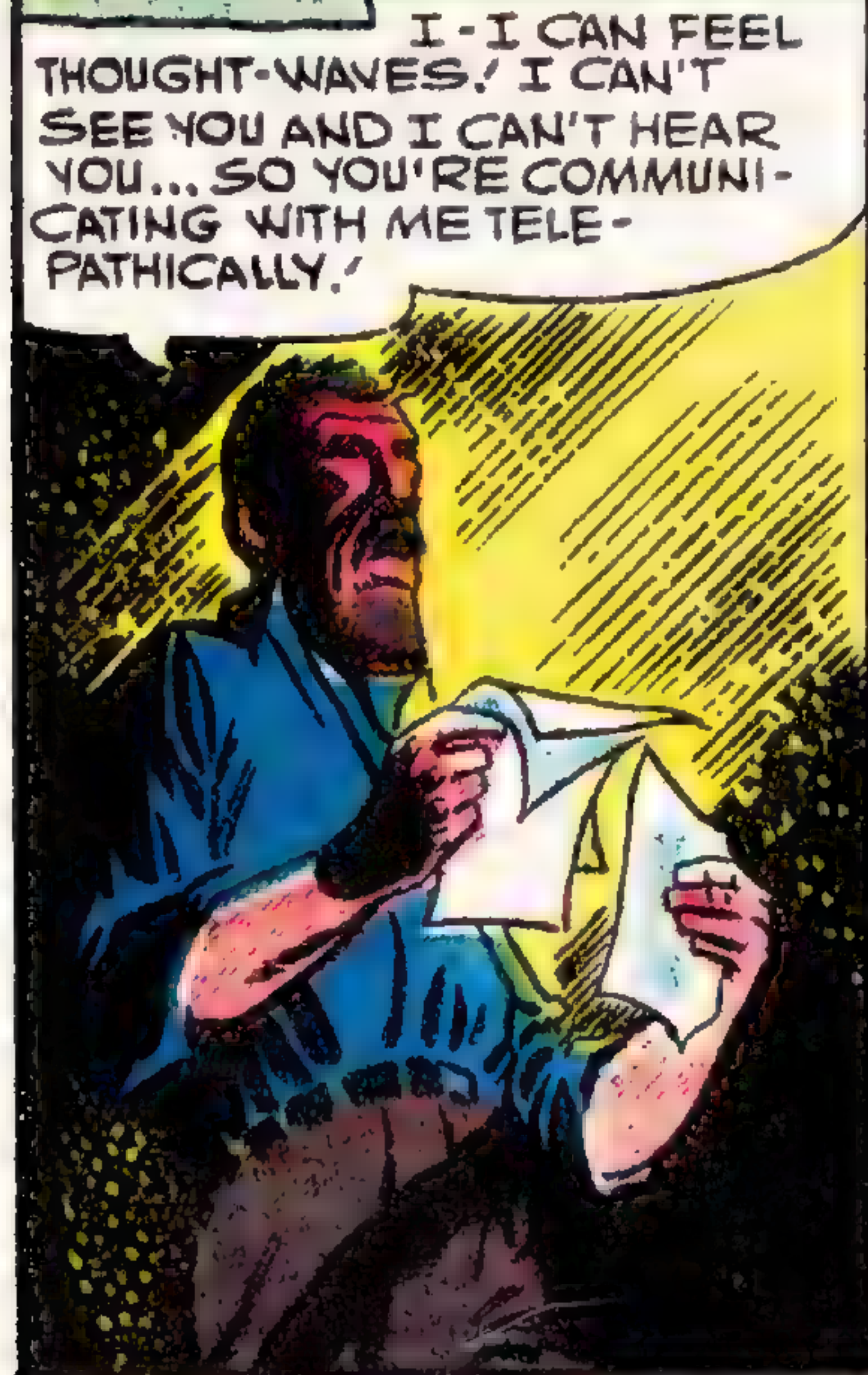
I HAVE TUGGED MY FRIEND AWAKE, AND NOW HE SEES THE UNBELIEVABLE TOO



HE RUSHES FORWARD! HE TEARS THE PAPERS AWAY! THERE IS A STRUGGLE! MY FRIEND KEEPS MUTTERING GRIMLY AS HE FIGHTS...



MY FRIEND IS STRONGER THAN THE INVISIBLE ONES! THEY NO LONGER FIGHT BACK! BUT NOW...



YOU'RE FROM ANOTHER WORLD! YOU MEAN NO HARM! YOU TOOK THE PAPERS ONLY TO ATTRACT ATTENTION! TO MAKE CONTACT!



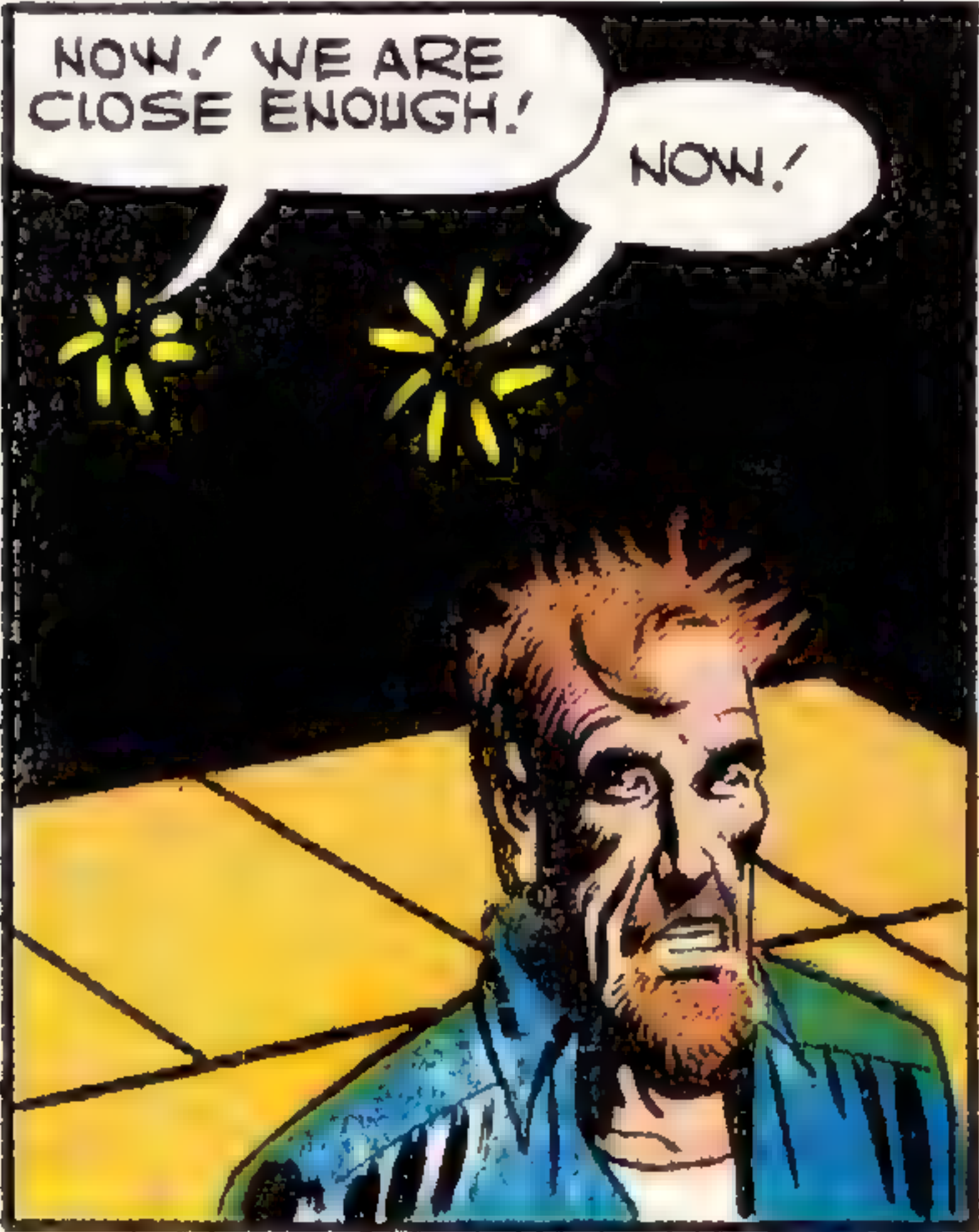
NOW, WHILE HE IS DIVERTED, WE MUST LEAP AT HIM FROM BEHIND! HE WILL SOON BE POWERLESS!



MY FRIEND CANNOT HEAR THOSE WHO CREEP UP BEHIND HIM... BUT I HEAR THEM...

NOW! WE ARE CLOSE ENOUGH!

NOW!



AND I LEAP AT THOSE WHO WOULD DO MY FRIEND HARM...

HEY?!



THEY TRY TO BEAT ME OFF WITH WHATEVER THEY CAN LAY THEIR INVISIBLE HANDS ON...

KURRASH

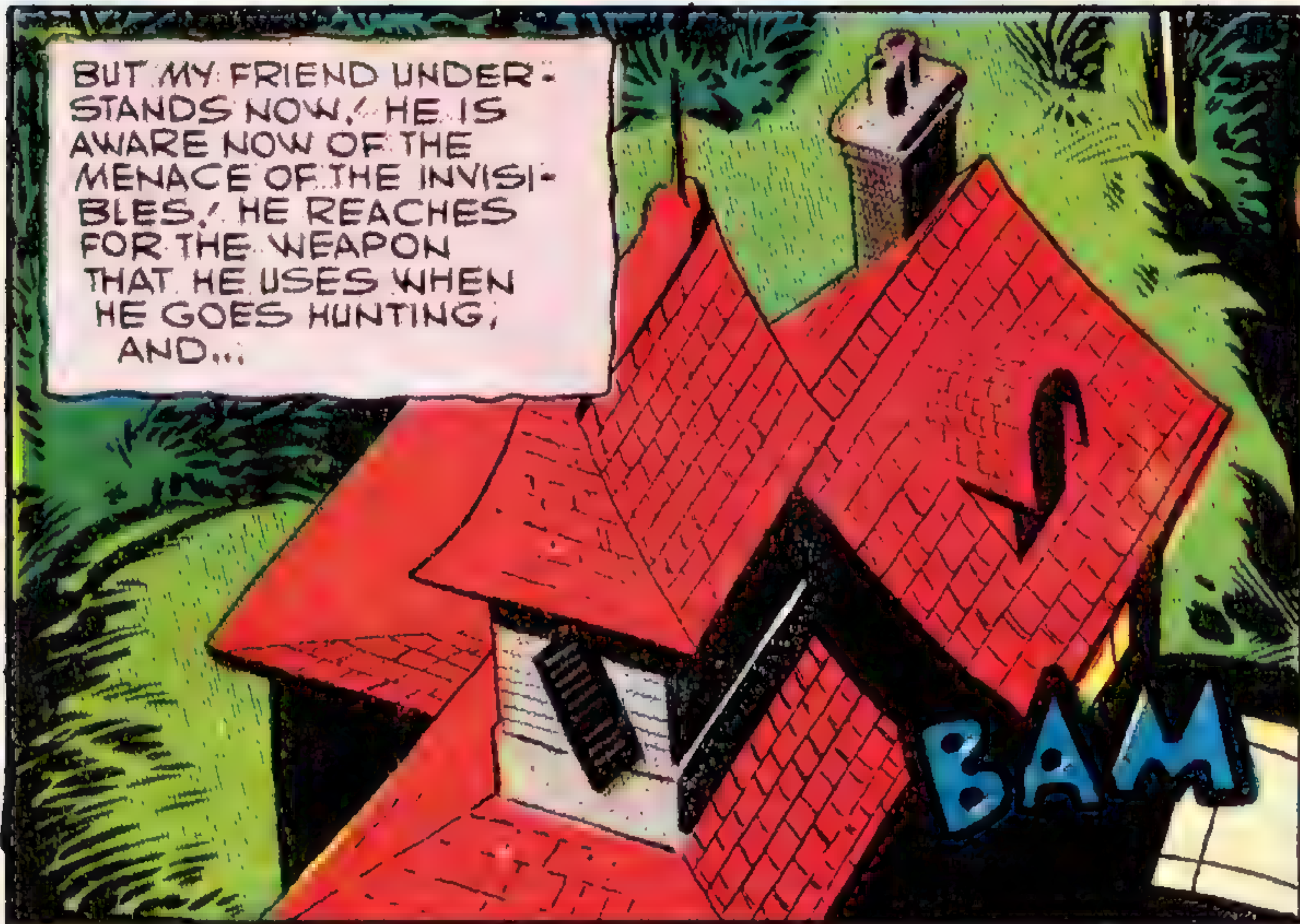
THUD

SMASSH



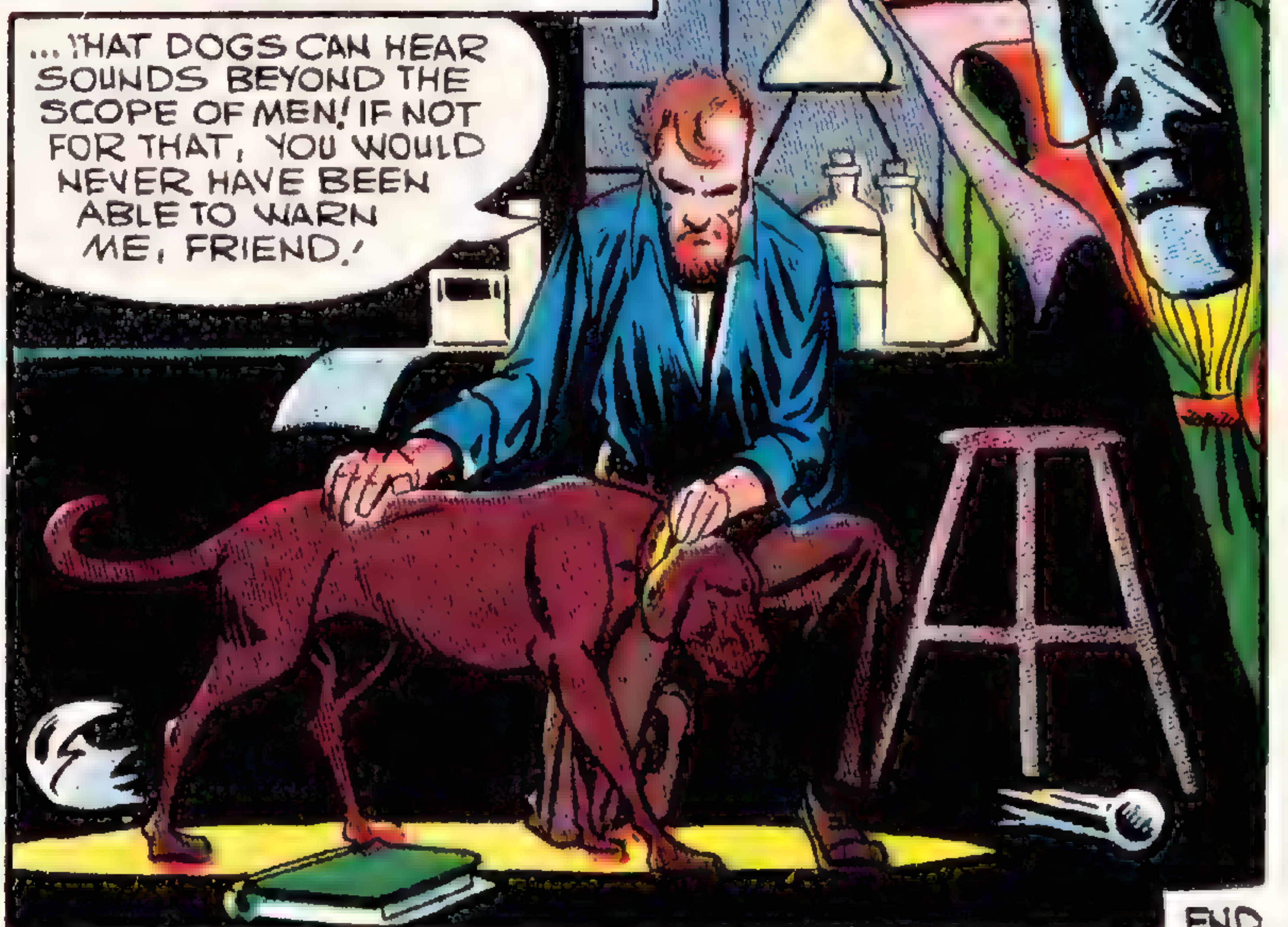
BUT MY FRIEND UNDERSTANDS NOW! HE IS AWARE NOW OF THE MENACE OF THE INVISIBLES! HE REACHES FOR THE WEAPON THAT HE USES WHEN HE GOES HUNTING, AND...

BAM



THEY'RE GONE! BUT I'VE SPREAD THE WORD, AND EVERYONE'LL BE READY FOR THEM IF THEY EVER COME BACK AGAIN! THANK HEAVENS...

... THAT DOGS CAN HEAR SOUNDS BEYOND THE SCOPE OF MEN! IF NOT FOR THAT, YOU WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN ABLE TO WARN ME, FRIEND!



END



STRANGE
SUSPENSE STORIES

No 34

STRANGE



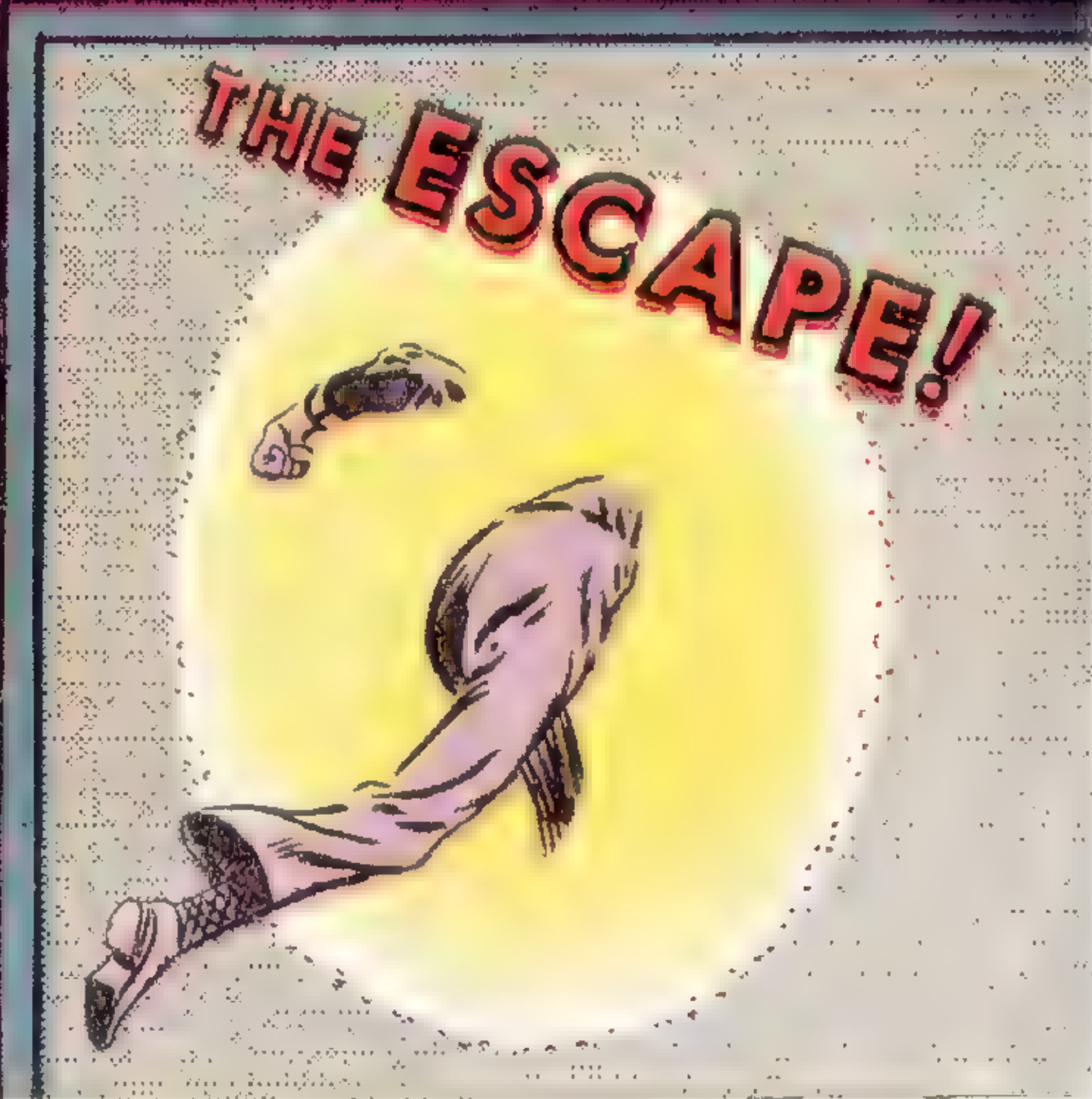
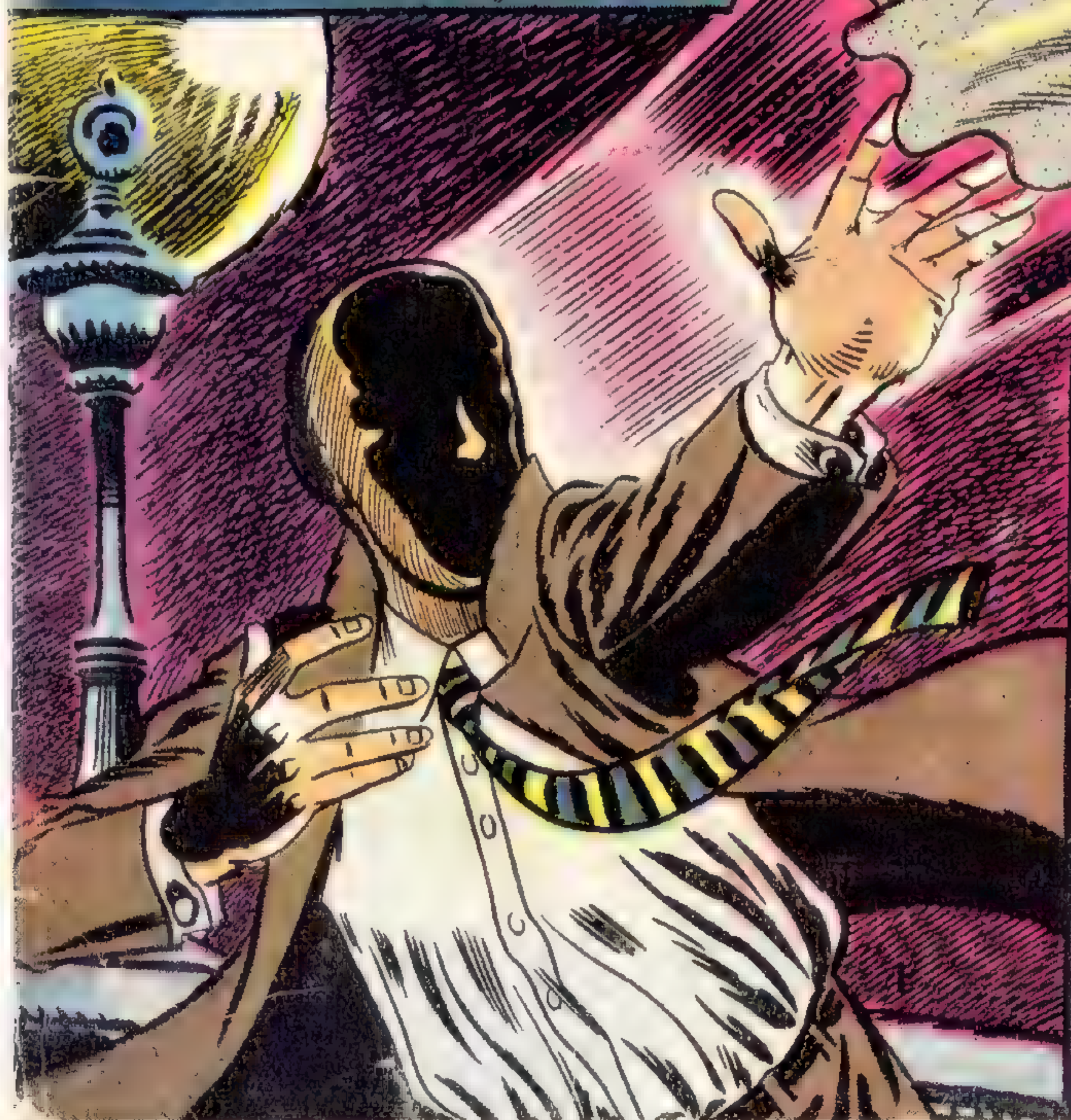
SUSPENSE STORIES

10¢

A CHARLTON PUBLICATION

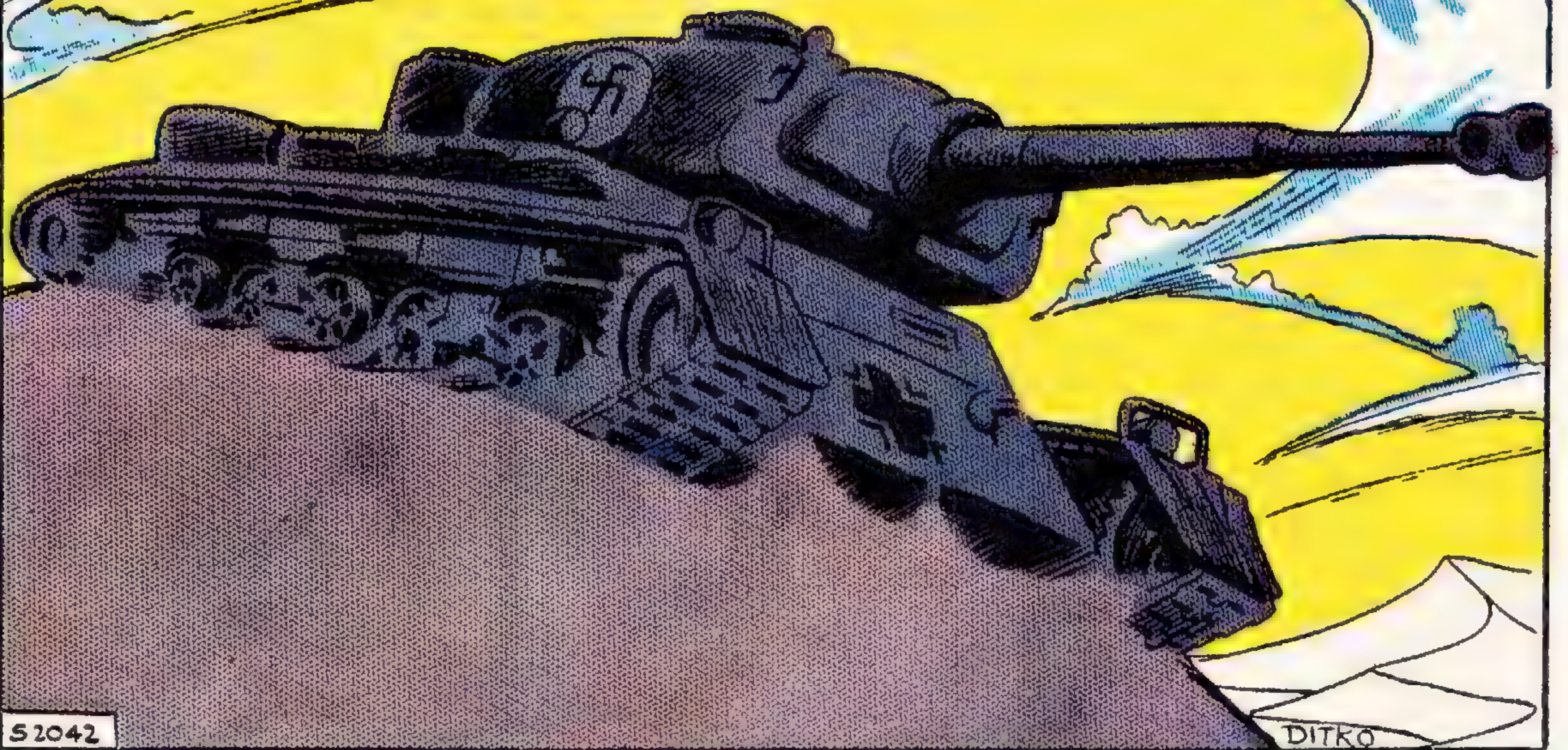


The Man Who Lost His Face!

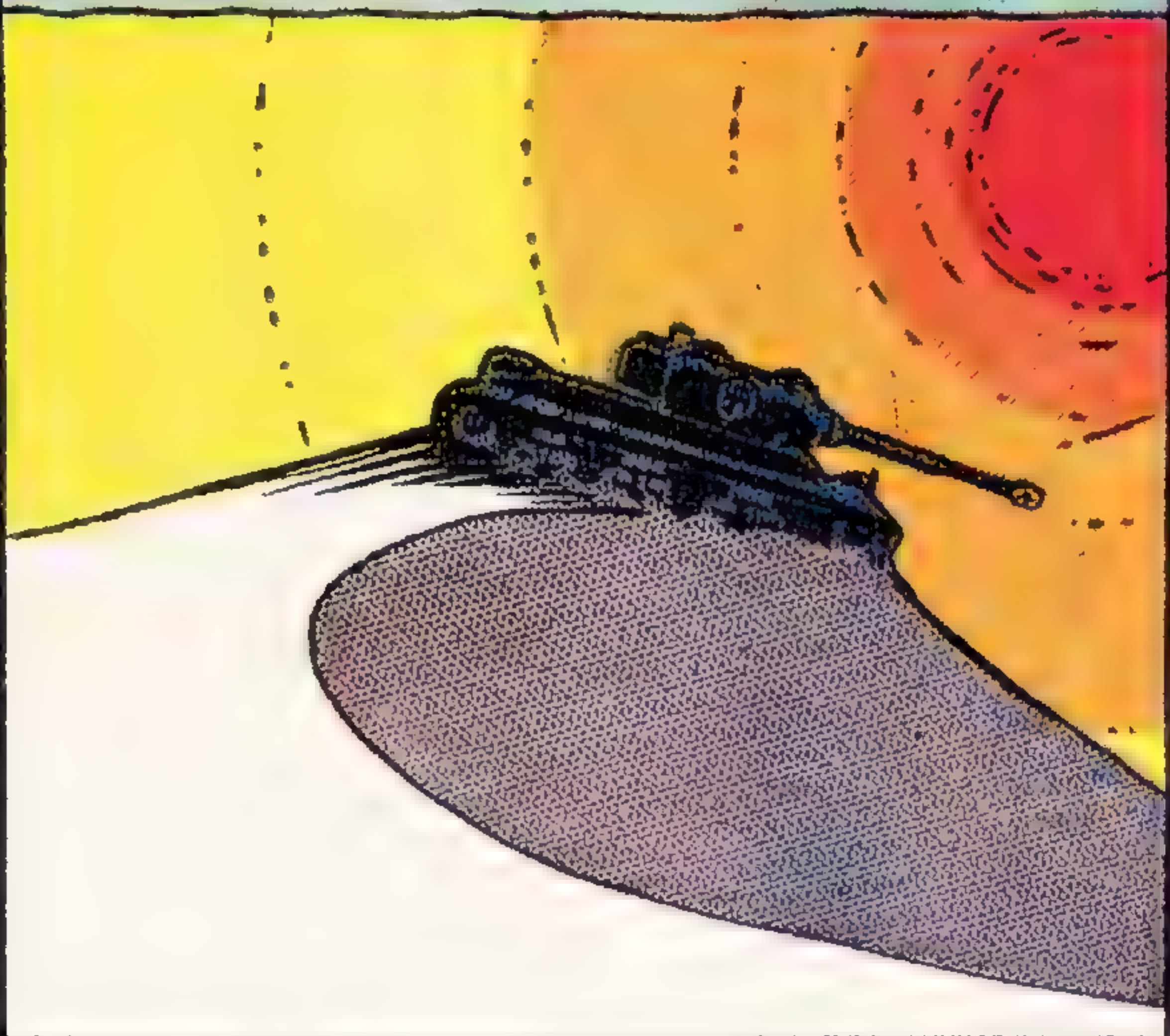


THE Desert Spell

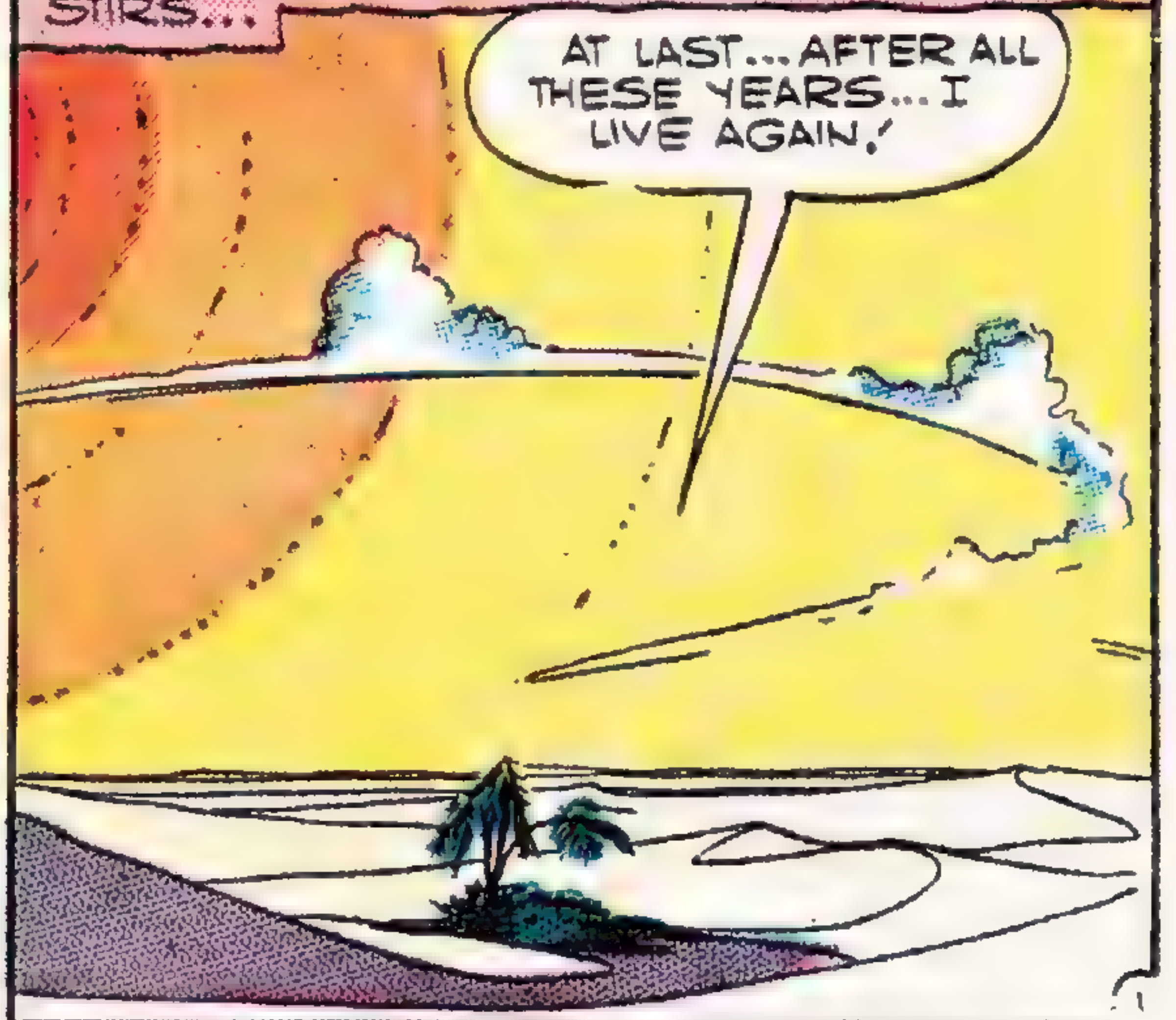
ALONE IN THE DESERT, SEARED BY THE PITILESS SUN AND PITTED BY NUMBERLESS SANDSTORMS, STANDS AN ABANDONED RELIC OF THE WAR THAT WAS ONCE FOUGHT HERE... **A TANK!**



ALONE, ABANDONED, CAUGHT IN THE VISE OF THE DESERT SPELL -- A TANK...



BUT NOW, AT THE NEARBY OASIS JUST BEYOND THE GIANT SAND DUNE, A FIGURE STIRS...



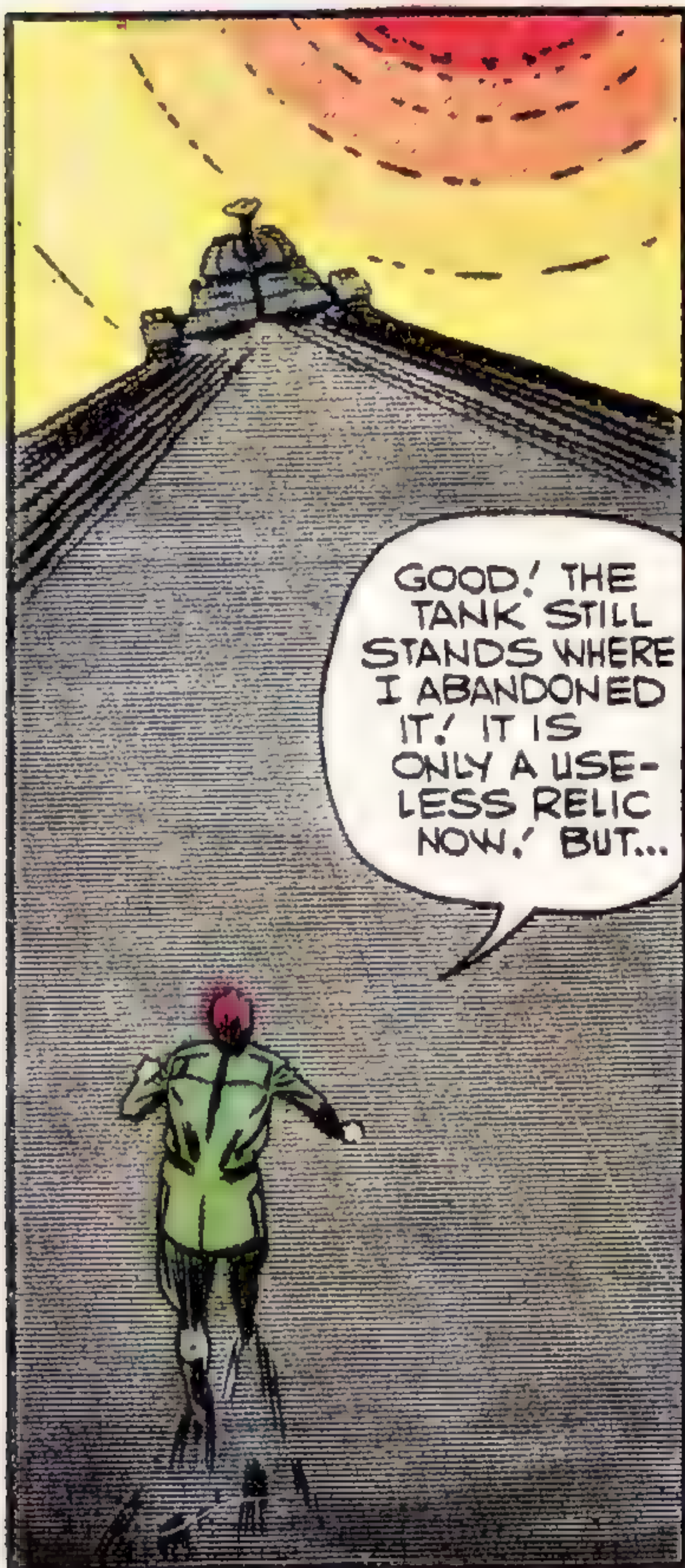
INCREDIBLE, BUT TRUE! THIS CHEMICAL WARFARE STAFF OFFICER OF THE ARMY THAT HAD BEEN DEFEATED HERE, RATHER THAN RISK CAPTURE AND TRIAL AS A WAR CRIMINAL...



...HAD, IN THE CLOSING DAYS OF THE WAR, PREPARED THIS OASIS AS A HIDING PLACE. HE HAD DRUNK A SUSPENDED ANIMATION SERUM OF HIS OWN DEIVING, AND ALL THESE YEARS HE HAD SLEPT, BUT NOW...

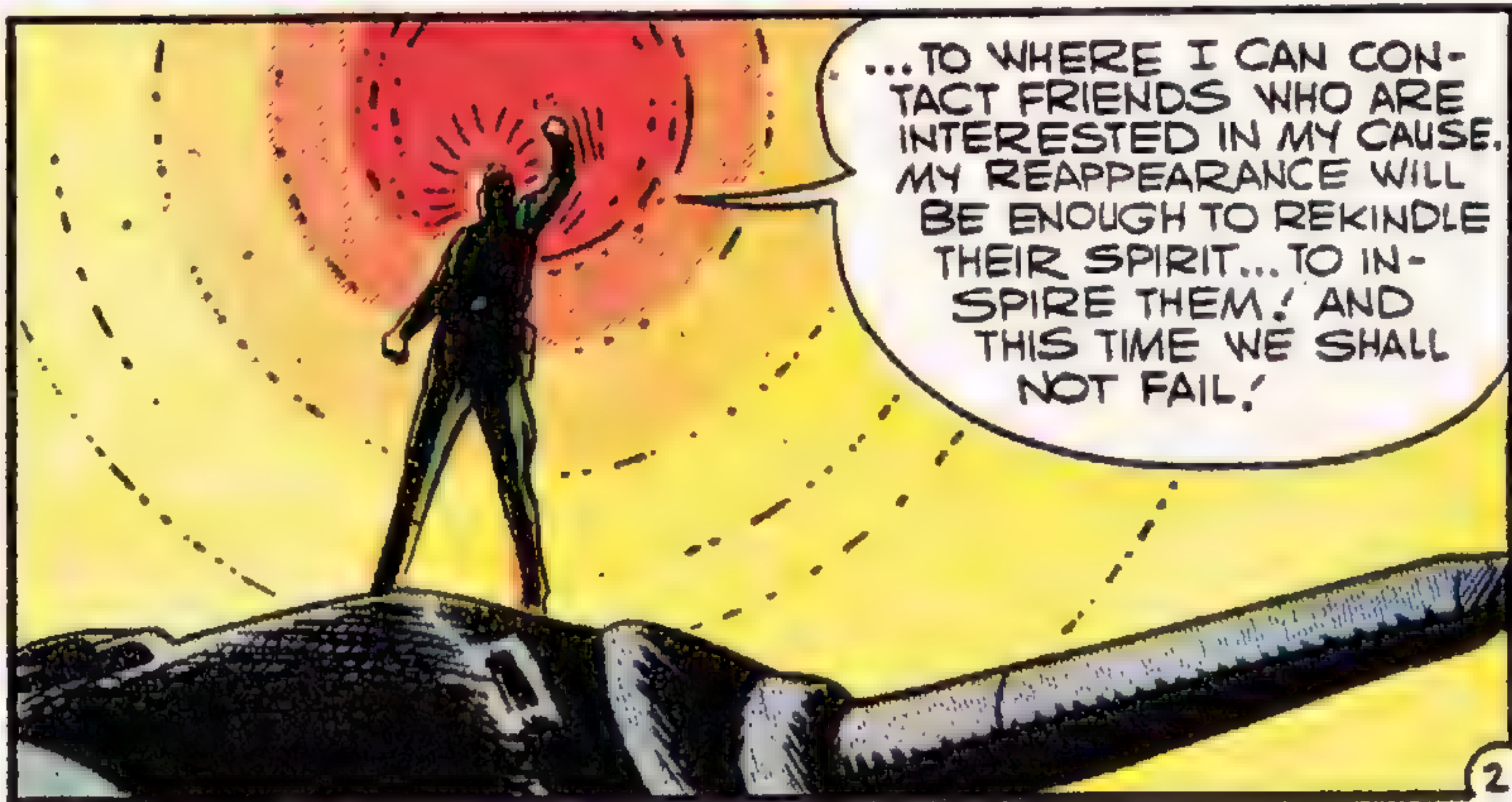


AND BECAUSE I LIVE AGAIN... WE SHALL HAVE ANOTHER CHANCE TO CONQUER THE WORLD!



GOOD! THE TANK STILL STANDS WHERE I ABANDONED IT! IT IS ONLY A USELESS RELIC NOW, BUT...

... BACK AT THE OASIS I HAVE ALL THE TOOLS AND PARTS I NEED TO REPAIR IT! SOON IT WILL CARRY ME ACROSS THE DESERT...



...TO WHERE I CAN CONTACT FRIENDS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN MY CAUSE. MY REAPPEARANCE WILL BE ENOUGH TO REKINDLE THEIR SPIRIT... TO INSPIRE THEM! AND THIS TIME WE SHALL NOT FAIL!



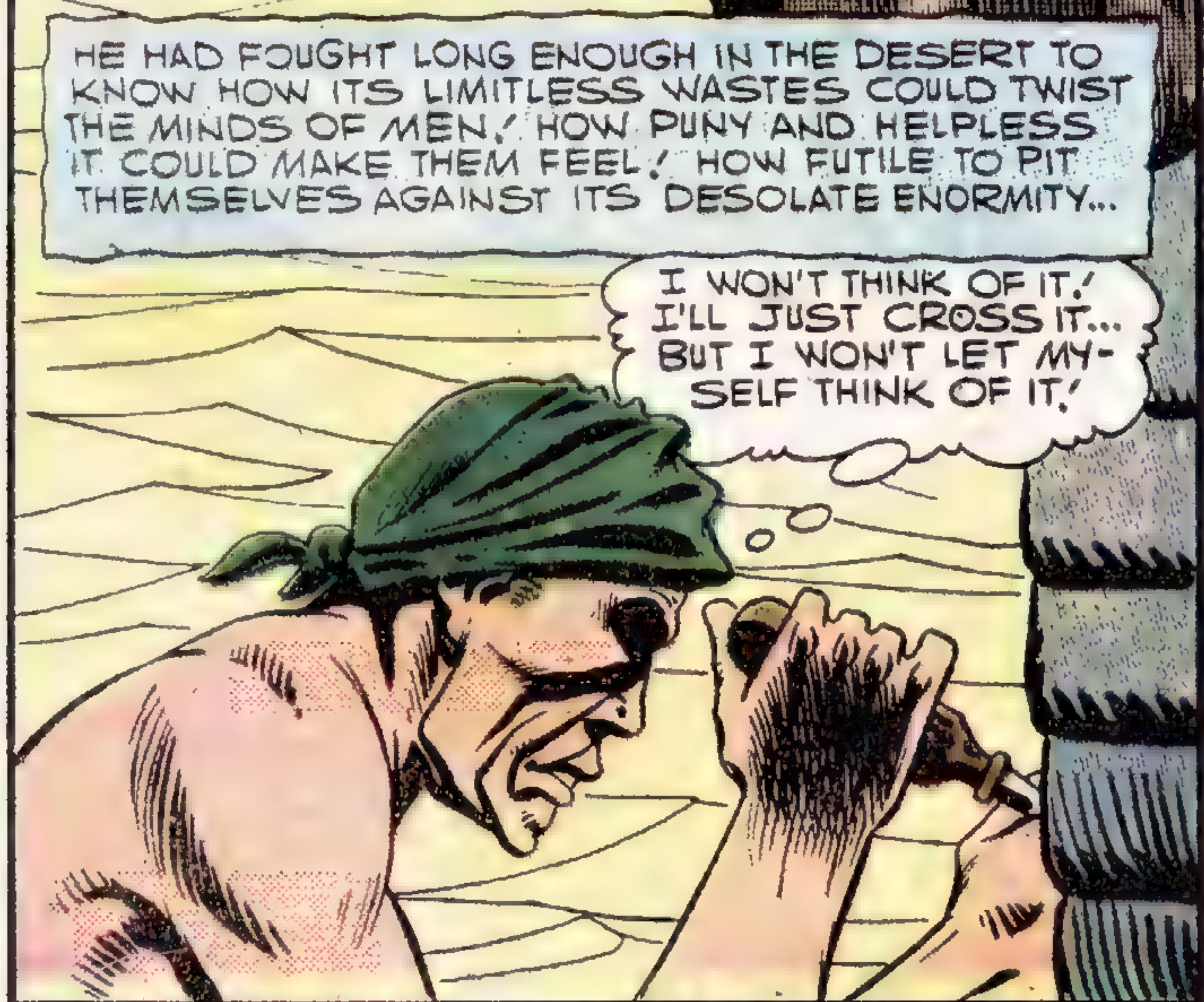
THIS TIME
WE **SHALL**
CONQUER
THE WORLD!



THE DAYS PASS WITH INSUFFERABLE SLOW-
NESS AS HE WORKS ON THE TANK...

THE DESERT SUN IS A BALL OF
FIRE IN THE SKY! THE DESERT
WINDS KEEN EERILY! BUT HE
KEEPS WORKING...

I MUST THINK ONLY OF MY
PLAN! I MUST THINK OF
NOTHING ELSE! I MUST
NOT LET MYSELF FALL
VICTIM TO THE DESERT
SPELL!



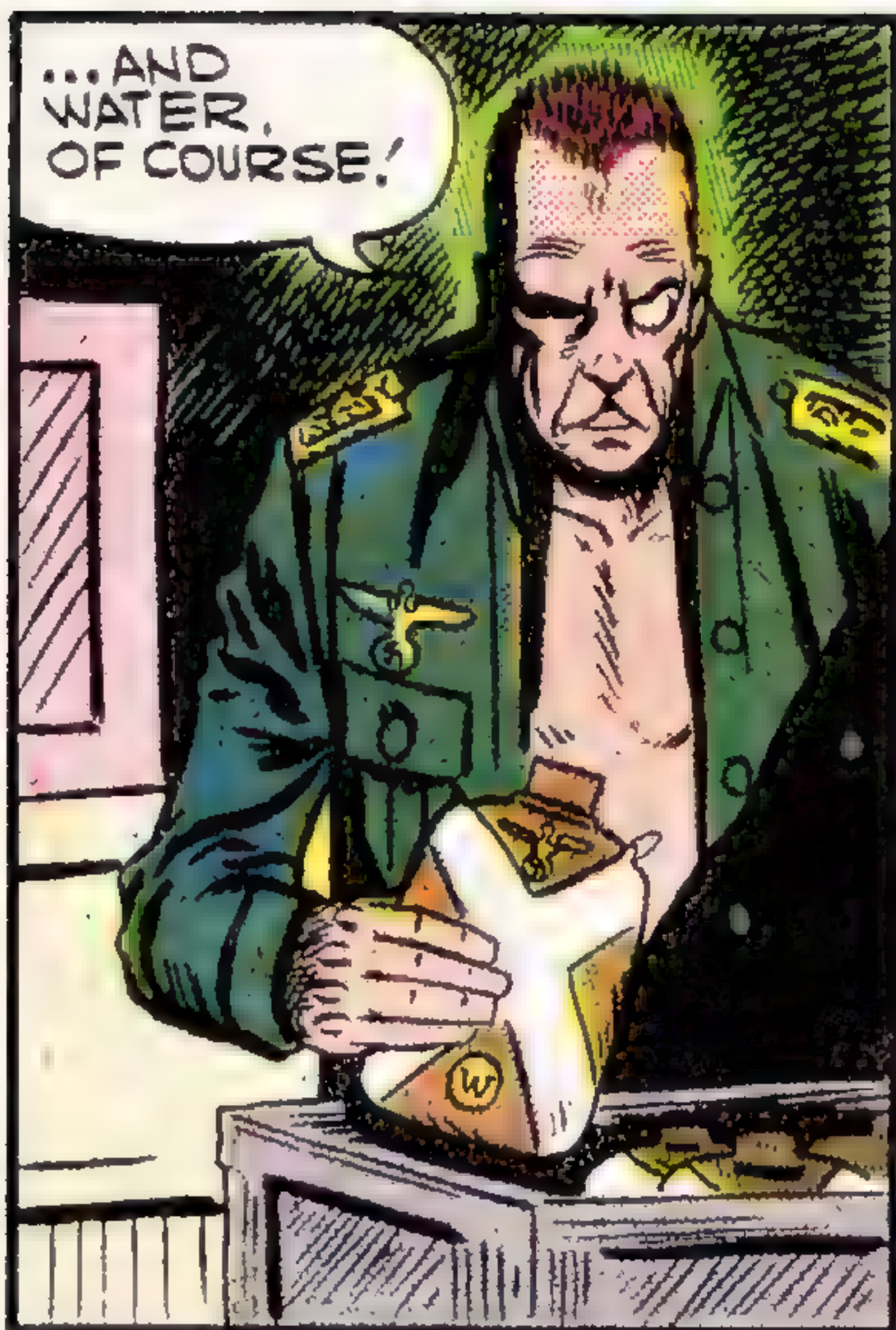
HE HAD FOUGHT LONG ENOUGH IN THE DESERT TO
KNOW HOW ITS LIMITLESS WASTES COULD TWIST
THE MINDS OF MEN! HOW PUNY AND HELPLESS
IT COULD MAKE THEM FEEL! HOW FUTILE TO PIT
THEMSELVES AGAINST ITS DESOLATE ENORMITY...

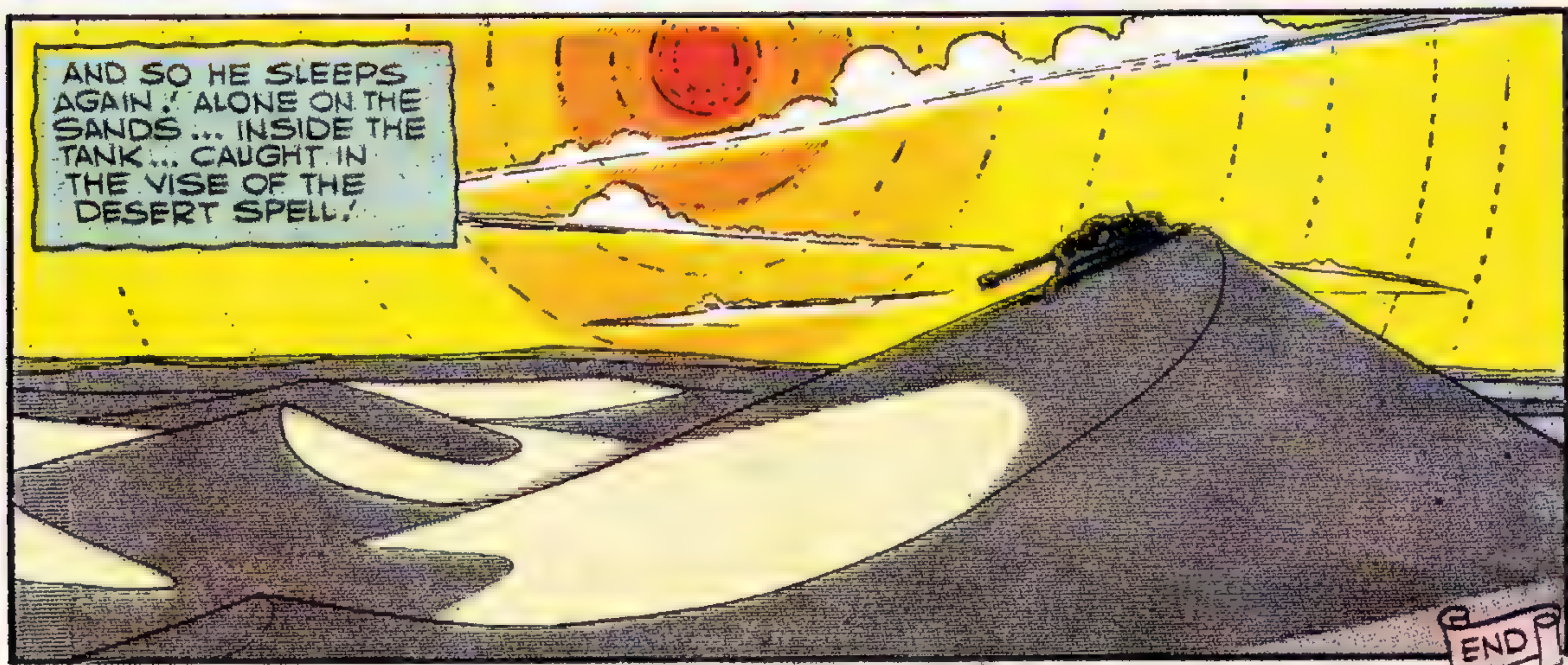
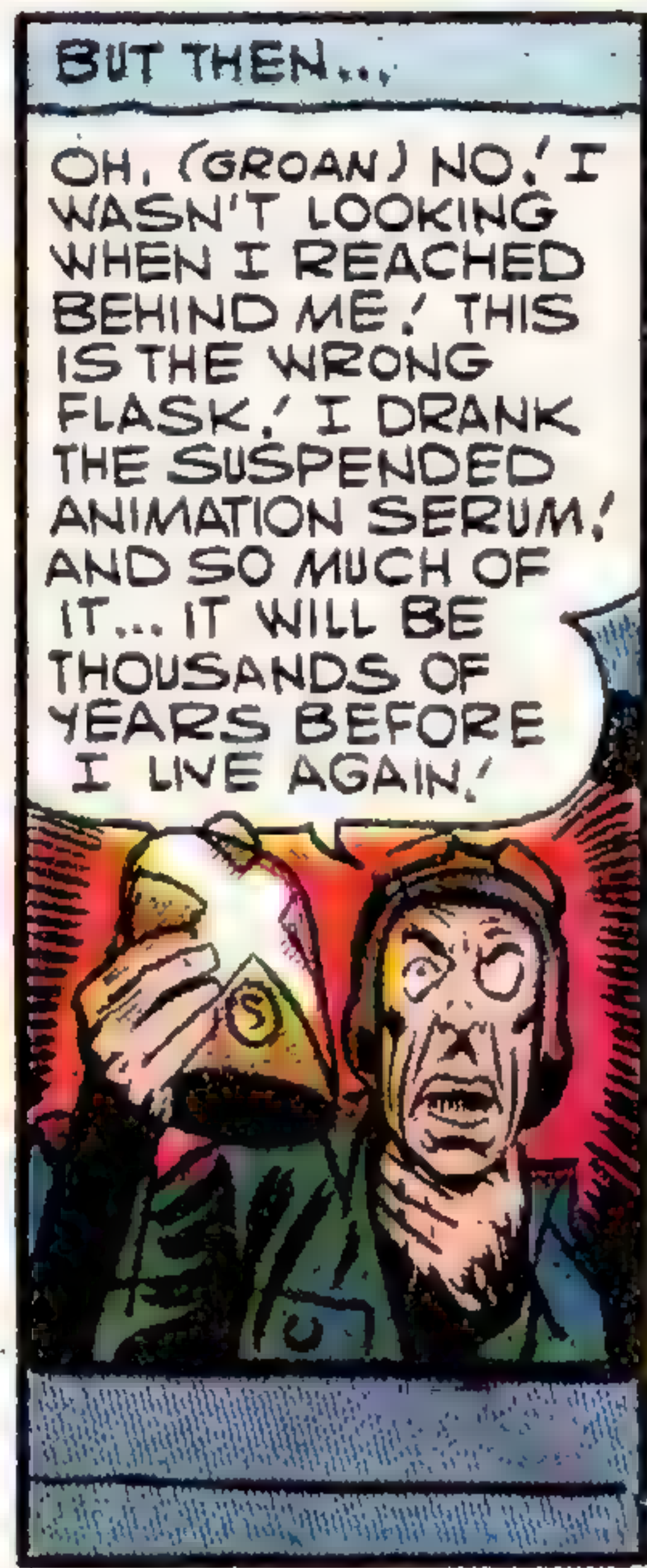
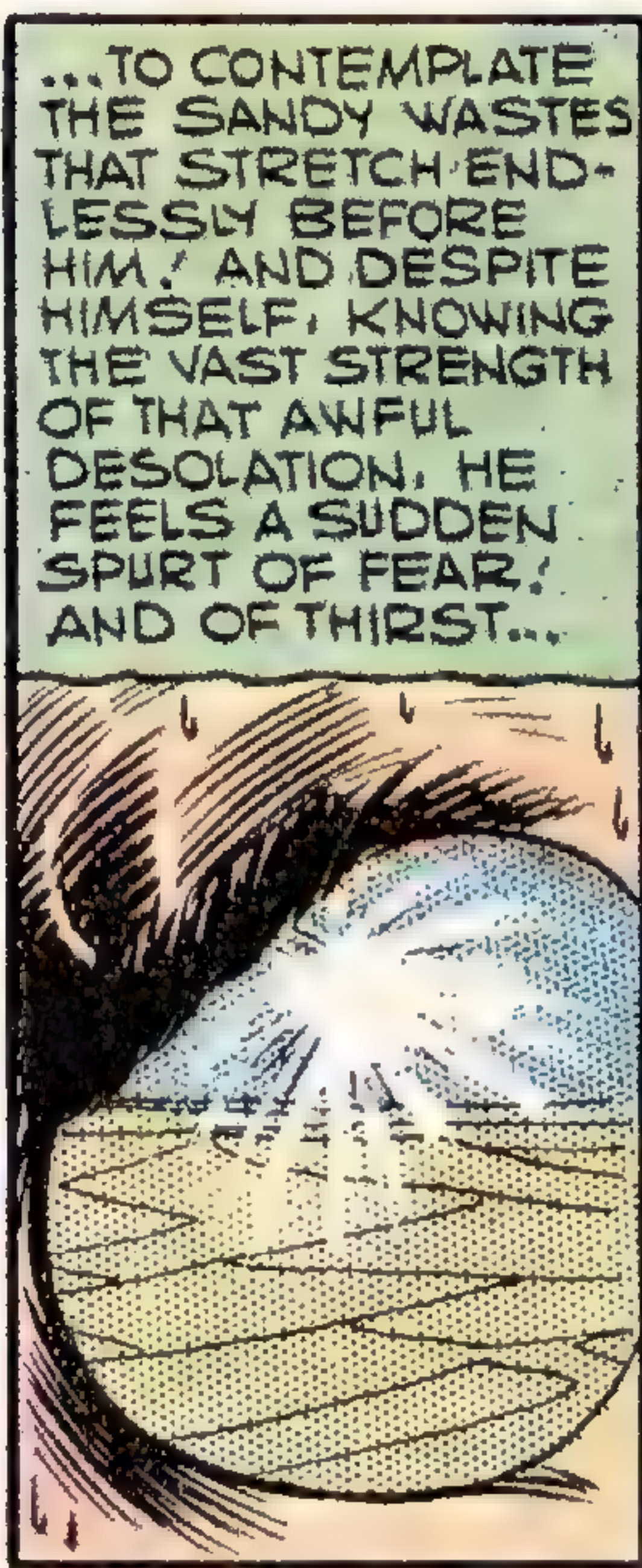
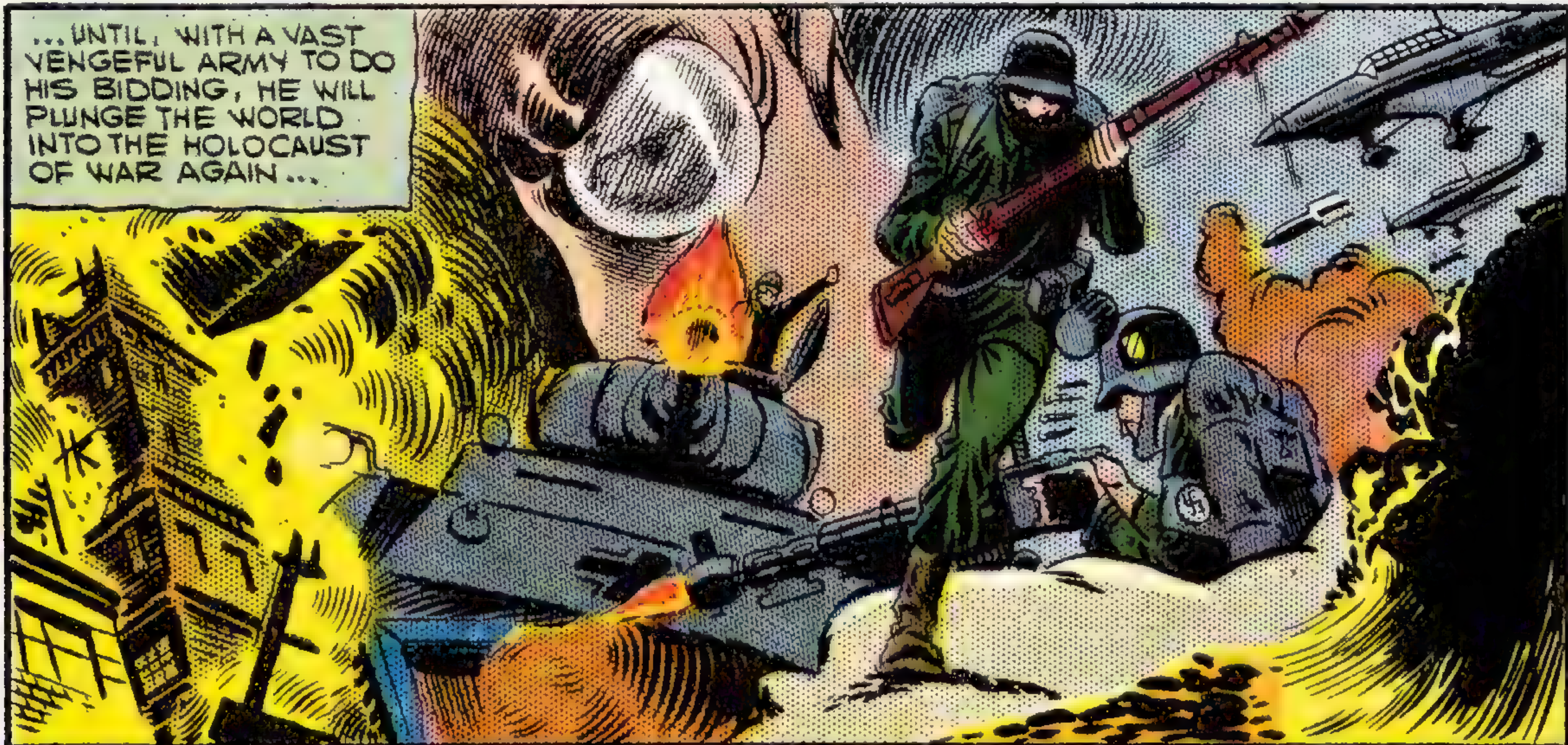
I WON'T THINK OF IT!
I'LL JUST CROSS IT...
BUT I WON'T LET MY-
SELF THINK OF IT!



AT LAST HE HAS COMPLETED THE
REPAIRS...

NOW TO LOAD
UP! WEAPONS,
FUEL, CON-
CENTRATED
FOOD PILLS...



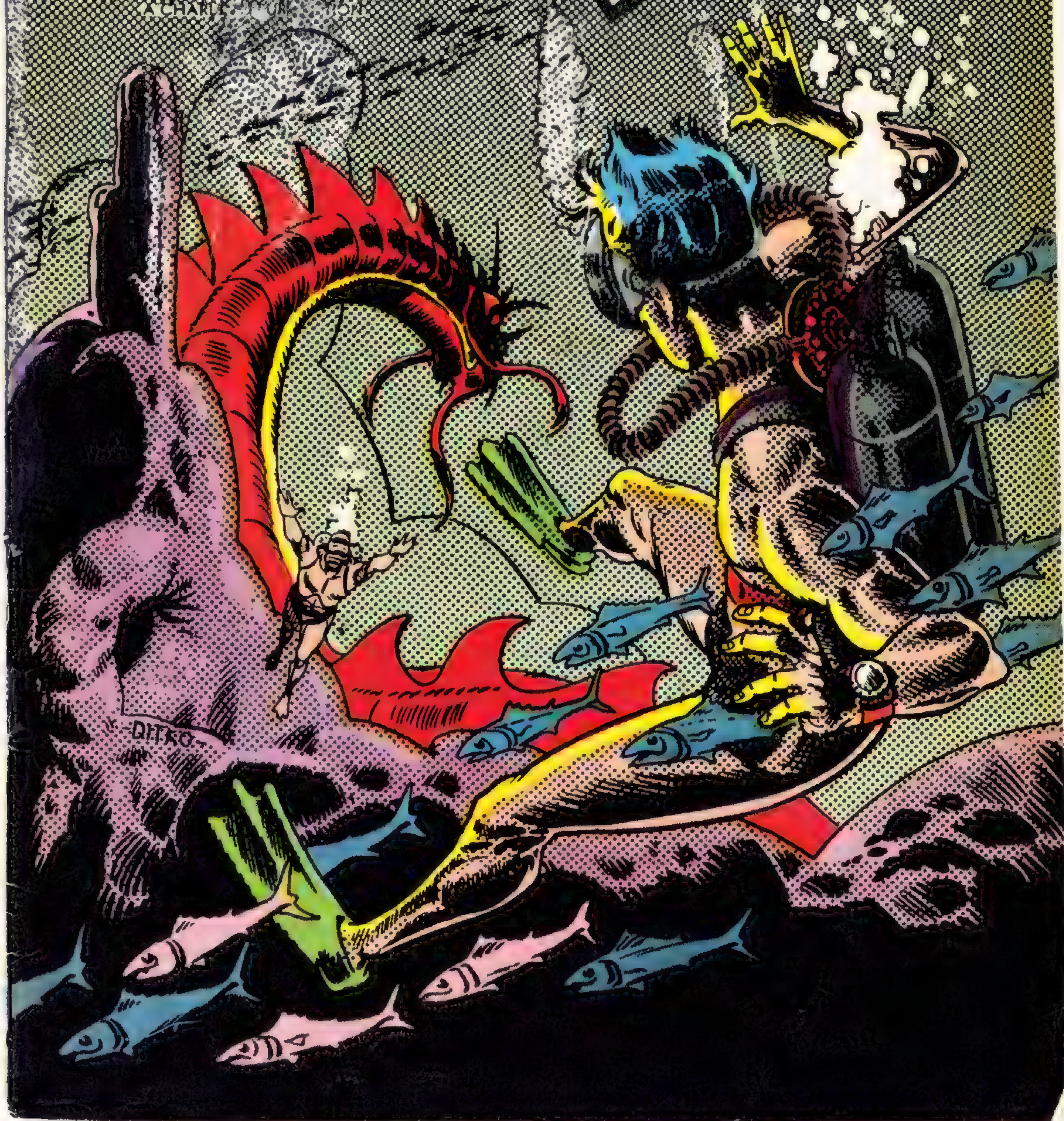


OUT OF THIS WORLD
No 5

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

OUT OF THIS WORLD

10¢



OUT OF THIS WORLD

No 5



THE NIGHT THEY LEARNED THE TRUTH



EVERY PERSON IN HAWKINS JUNCTION WAS MARCHING UP THE HILL, THE MYSTERY HAD HUNG LIKE AN EVIL FOG OVER OUR TOWN LONG ENOUGH...

WHAT HAD HAPPENED JUST BEFORE, WAS THE LAST STRAW THAT BROKE THE CAMEL'S BACK. NOTHING COULD STOP US, WE WERE GOING TO LEARN THE TRUTH ABOUT THIS STRANGER THIS VERY NIGHT... OR ELSE...



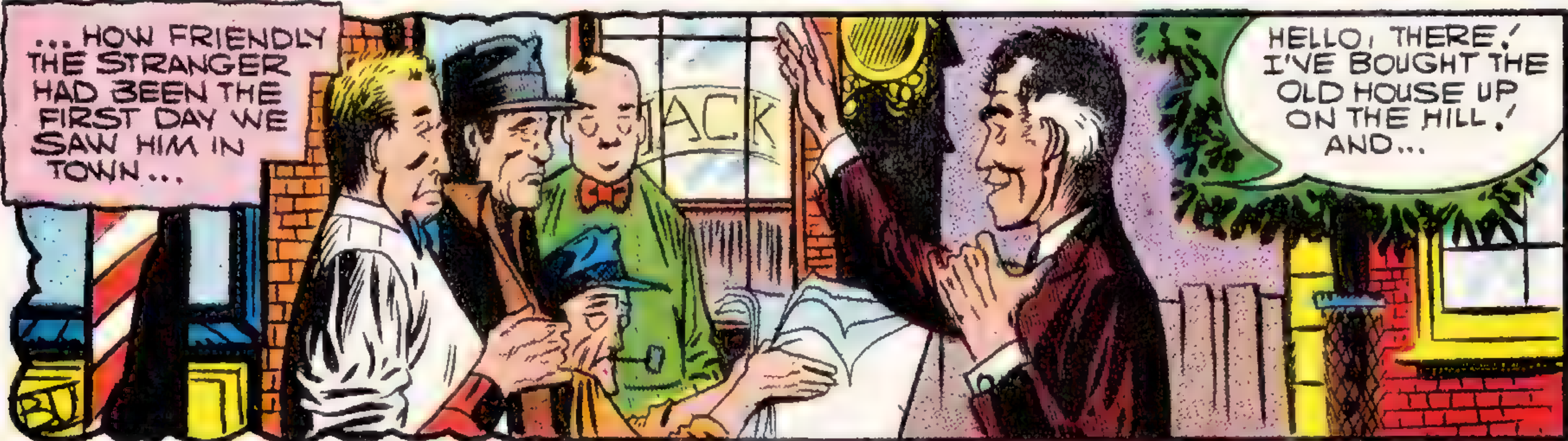
BUT JUST THEN ANOTHER OF THOSE FLASHES SPUTTERED UP FROM THE WINDOWS OF THE STRANGER'S HOUSE -- AND THE EARTH TREMBLED UNDERFOOT...



WE CRINGED BACK! THE WINDOWS WERE BLACK AGAIN, BUT WE WERE STILL HUDDLED TOGETHER! EVERY LAST ONE OF US STARING AT THOSE BLACK WINDOWS... REMEMBERING...

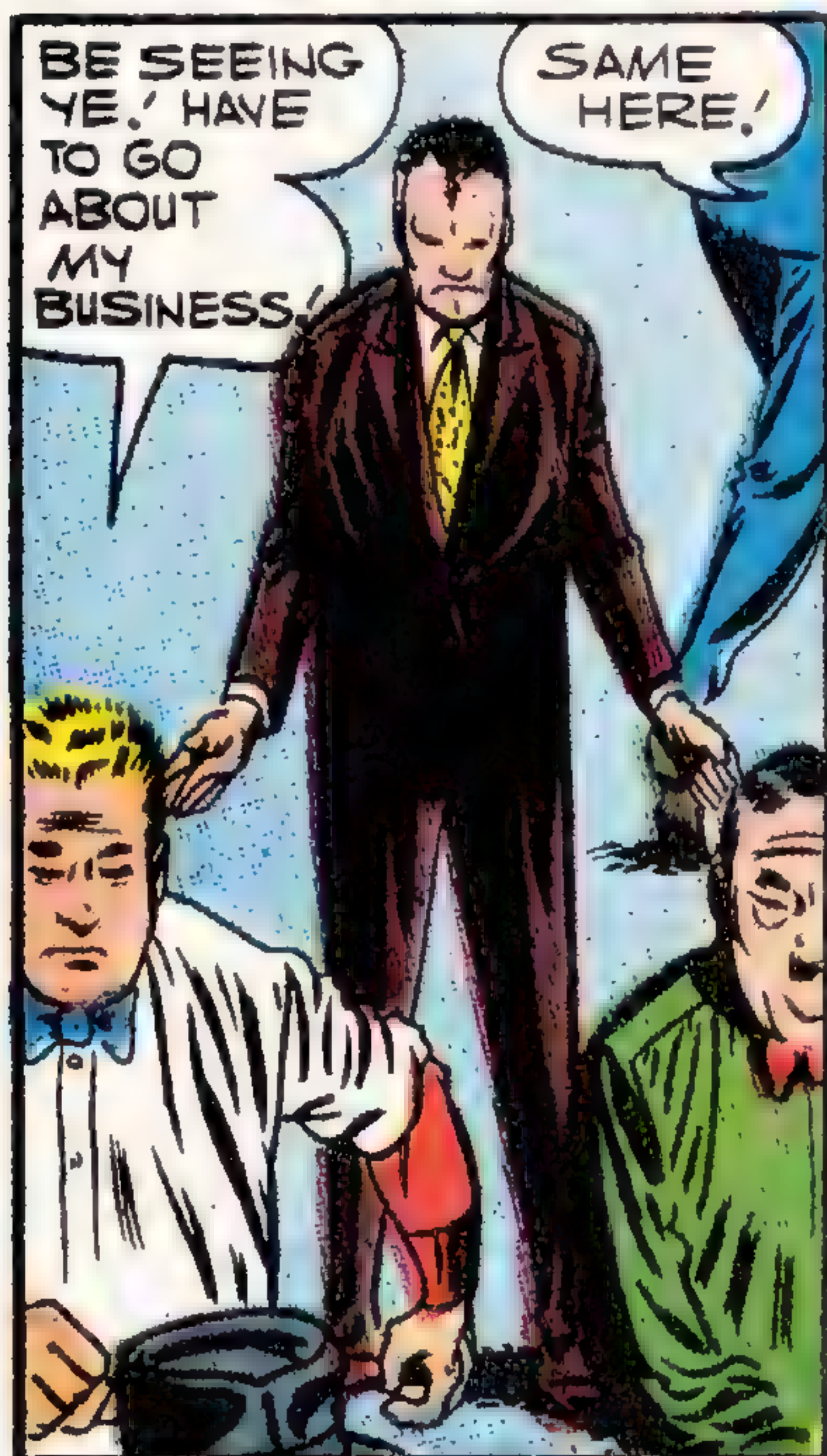


... HOW FRIENDLY THE STRANGER HAD BEEN THE FIRST DAY WE SAW HIM IN TOWN...



HELLO, THERE! I'VE BOUGHT THE OLD HOUSE UP ON THE HILL! AND...

BUT WE OF HAWKINS JUNCTION NEVER TOOK KINDLY TO STRANGERS WHO TRIED TO PUSH THEMSELVES ONTO US...



BE SEEING YE.' HAVE TO GO ABOUT MY BUSINESS.

SAME HERE!

WE DIDN'T MEAN ANY HARM! THAT WAS JUST OUR WAY! IF THE STRANGER HAD JUST BIDED HIS TIME, WE WOULD'VE WARMED UP BEFORE TOO LONG! BUT THE WAY HE KEPT PUSHING HIMSELF AGAIN AND AGAIN, JUST WENT AGAINST OUR GRAIN...

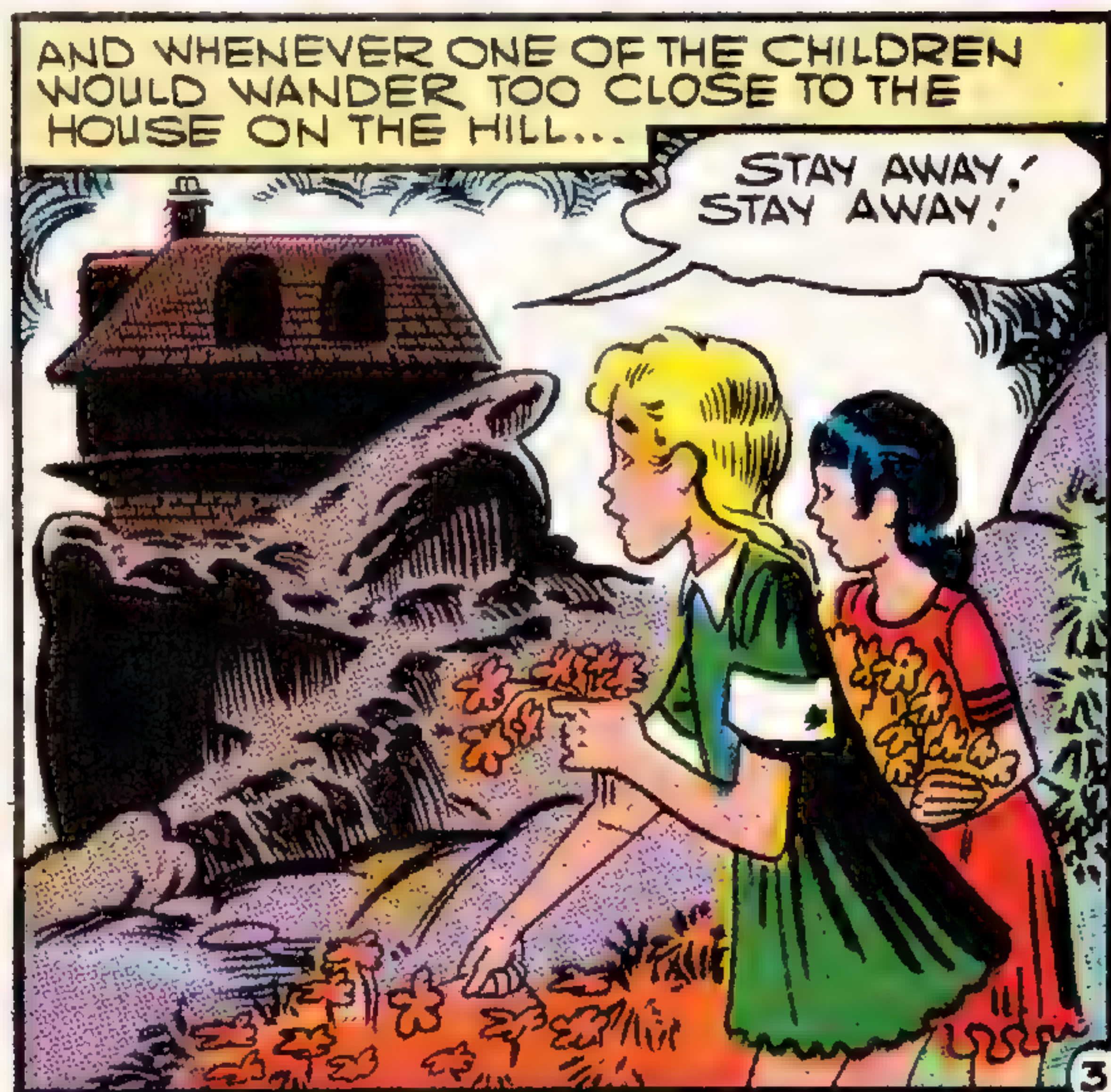
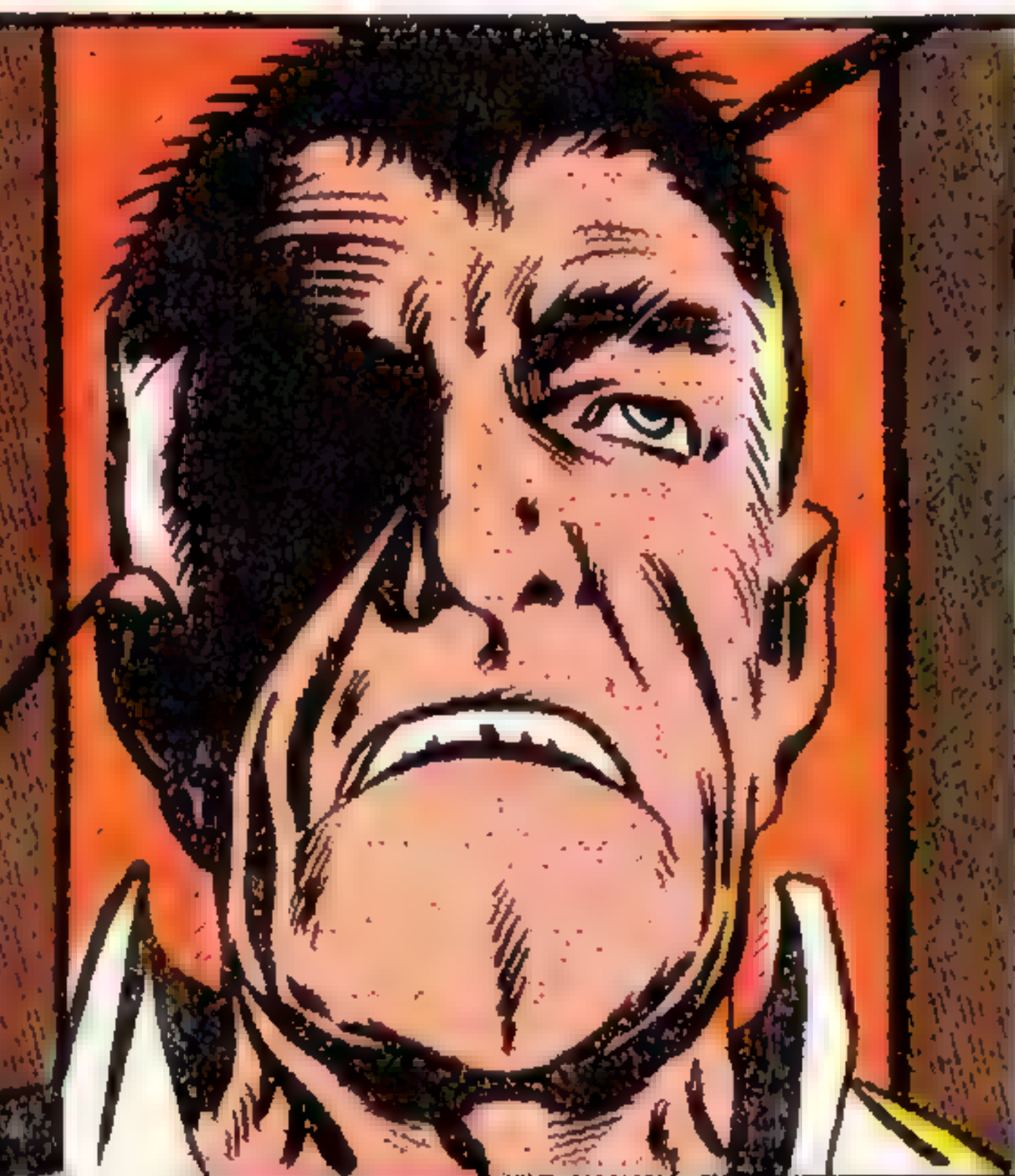
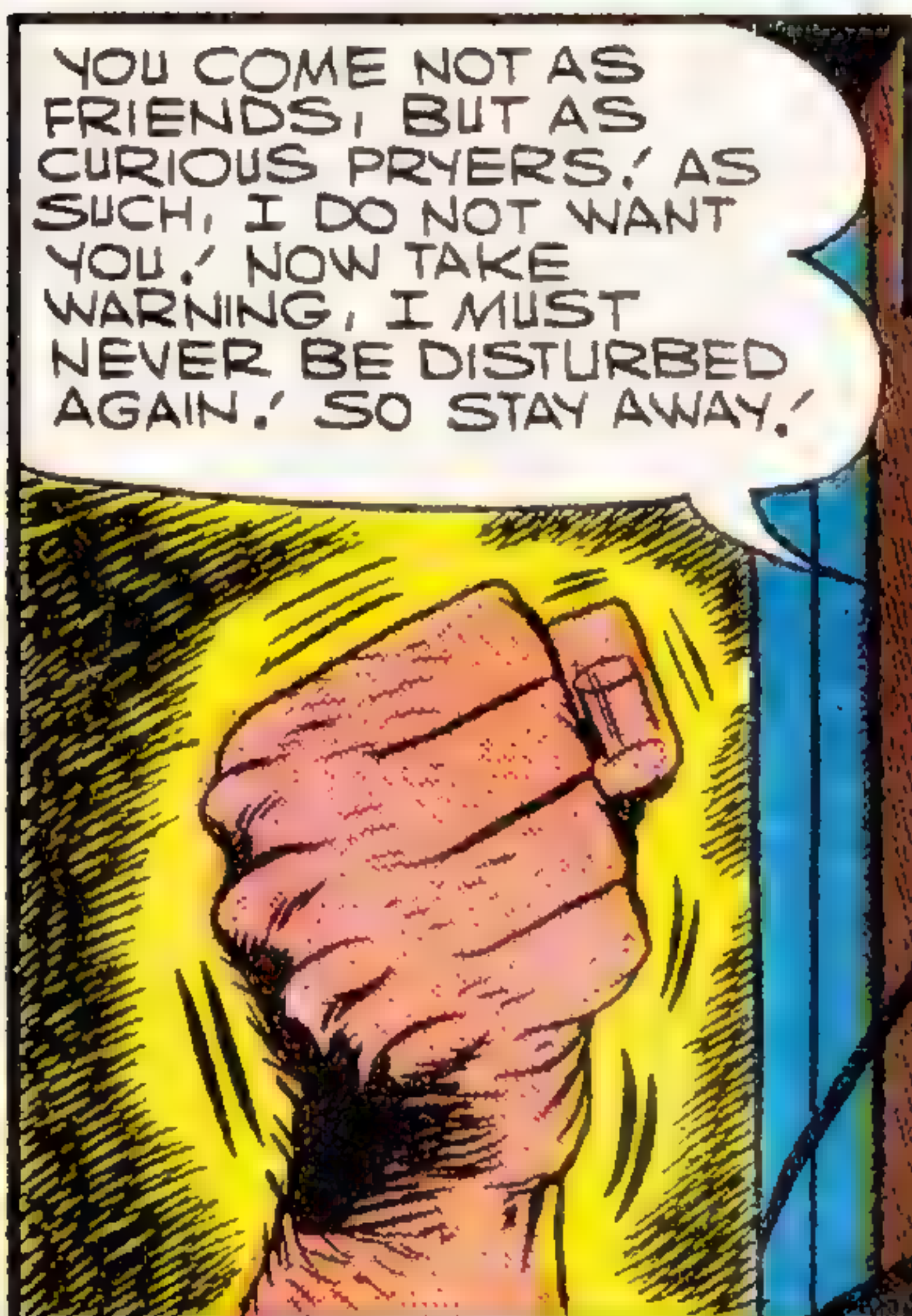


PLEASE! WON'T ANYONE TALK TO ME...

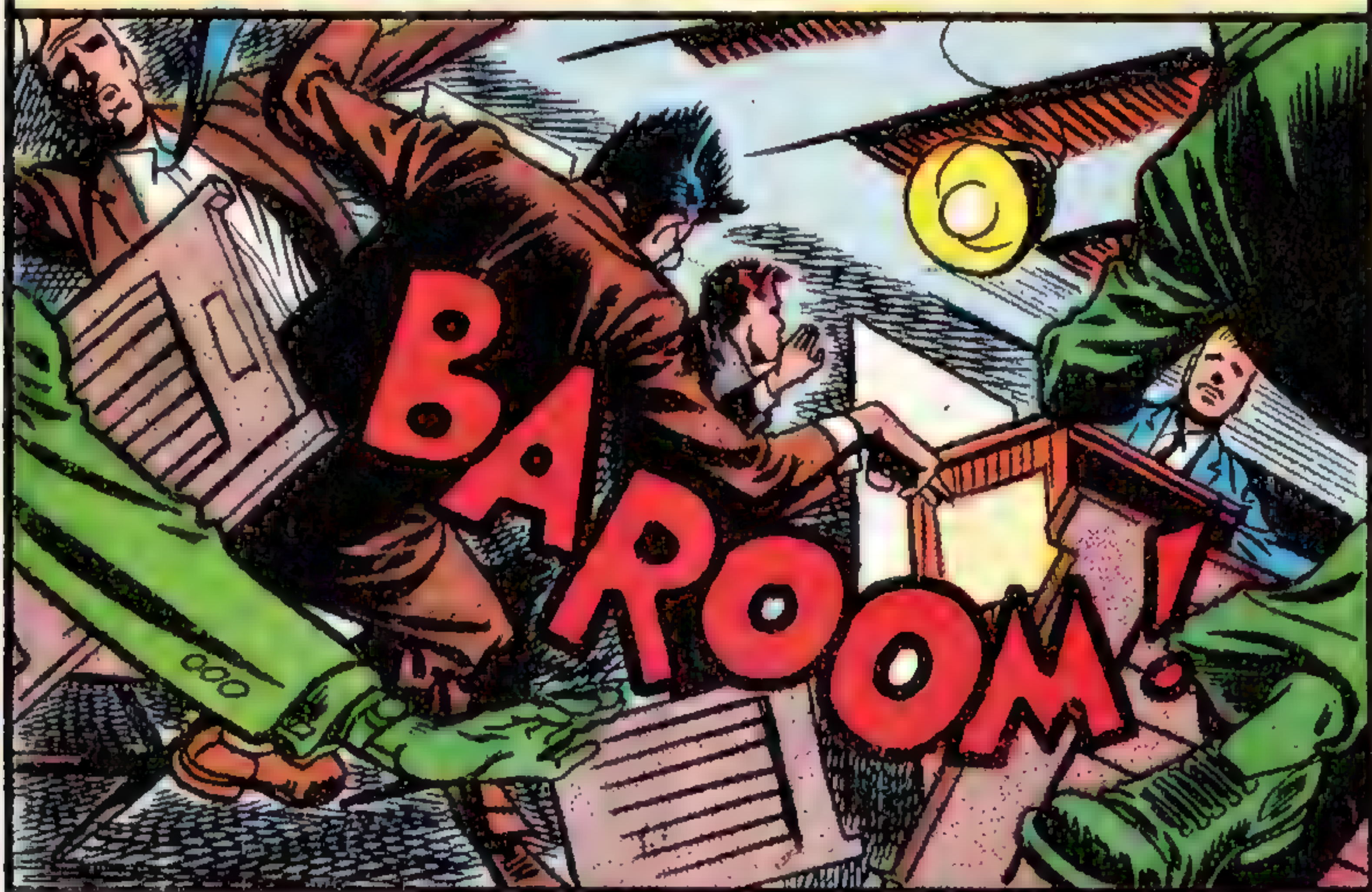
THEN ALL OF A SUDDEN HE STOPPED TRYING! HE KEPT TO HIMSELF! WHOLE DAYS WOULD PASS WITH HIM LOCKED UP ON TOP OF THAT HILL! AND IT WAS ONLY NATURAL THAT WE SHOULD START WONDERING...



WHAT COULD HE BE DOING UP THERE BY HIMSELF ALL THE TIME?



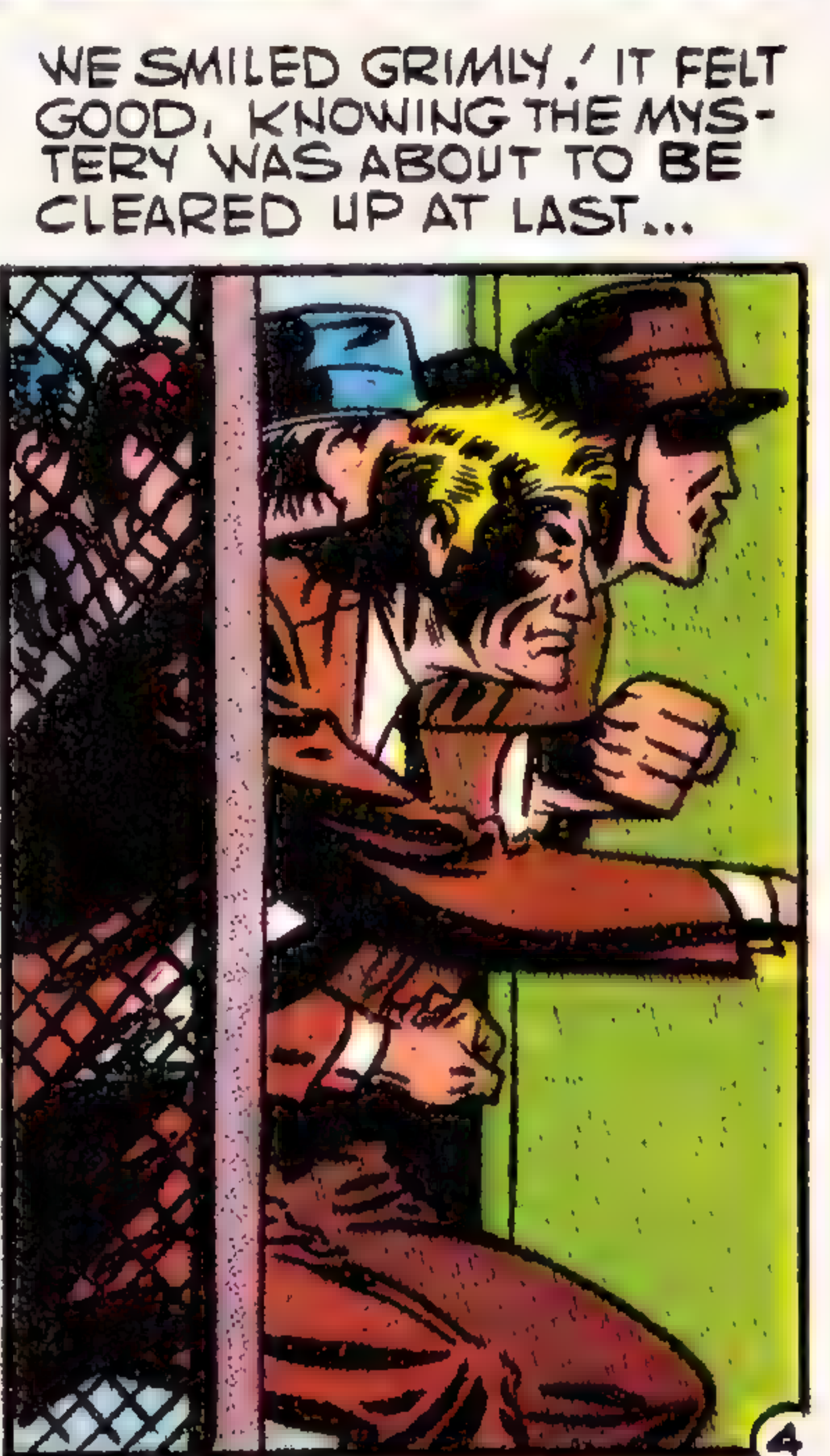
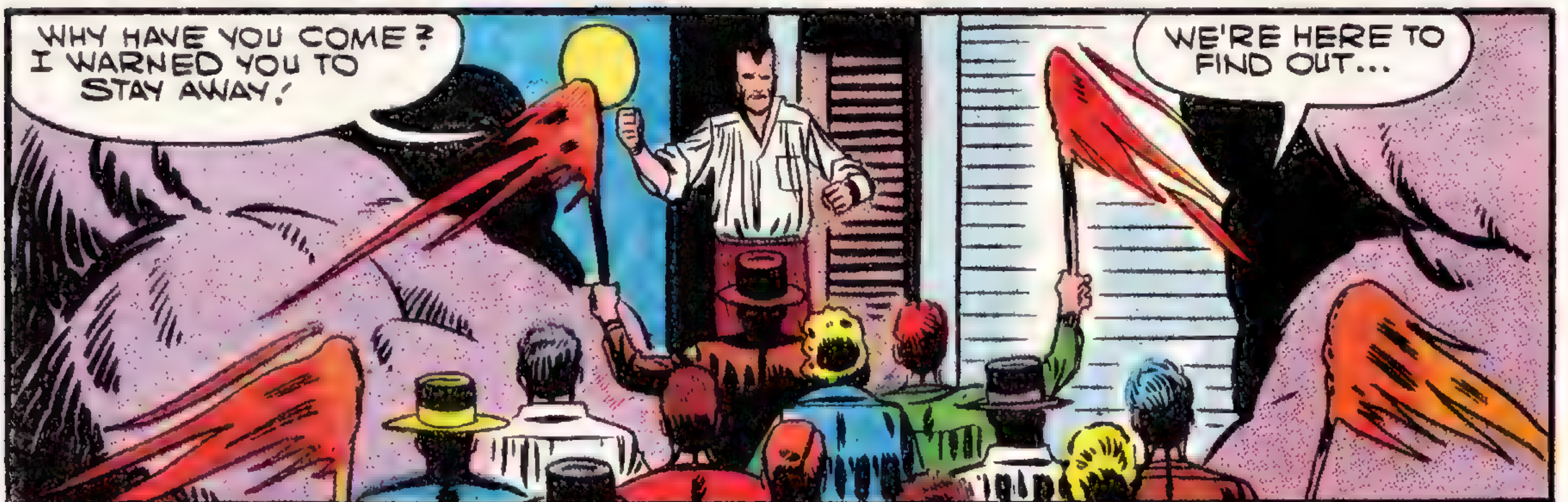
TONIGHT WE WERE ALL GATHERED TOGETHER IN THE TOWN HALL, HOLDING A MEETING, WHEN SUDDENLY...



THAT BLAST CAME FROM THE STRANGER'S HOUSE! IT'S HIGH TIME WE FOUND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON UP THERE...BEFORE THE TOWN IS BLOWN SKY HIGH!

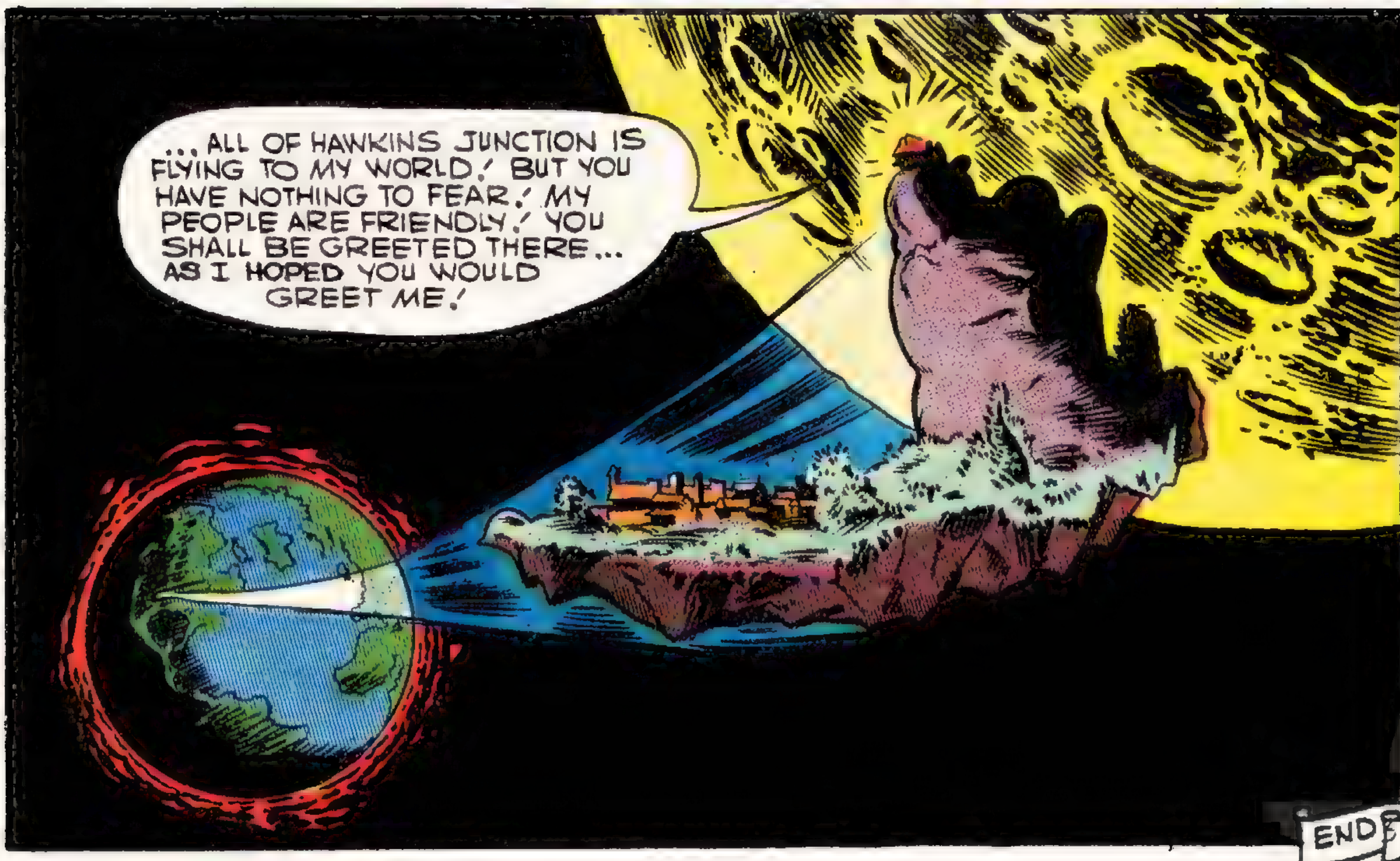
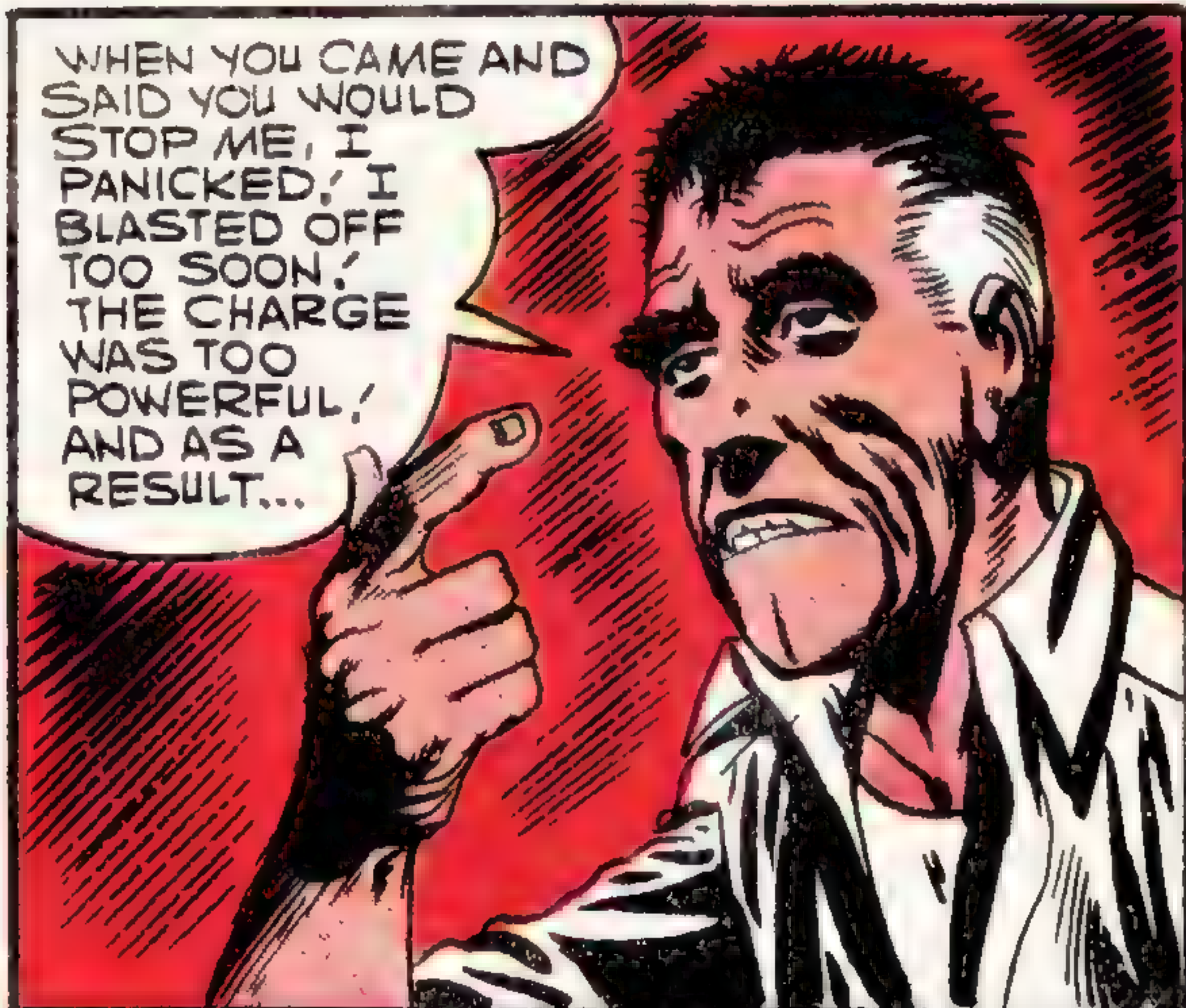
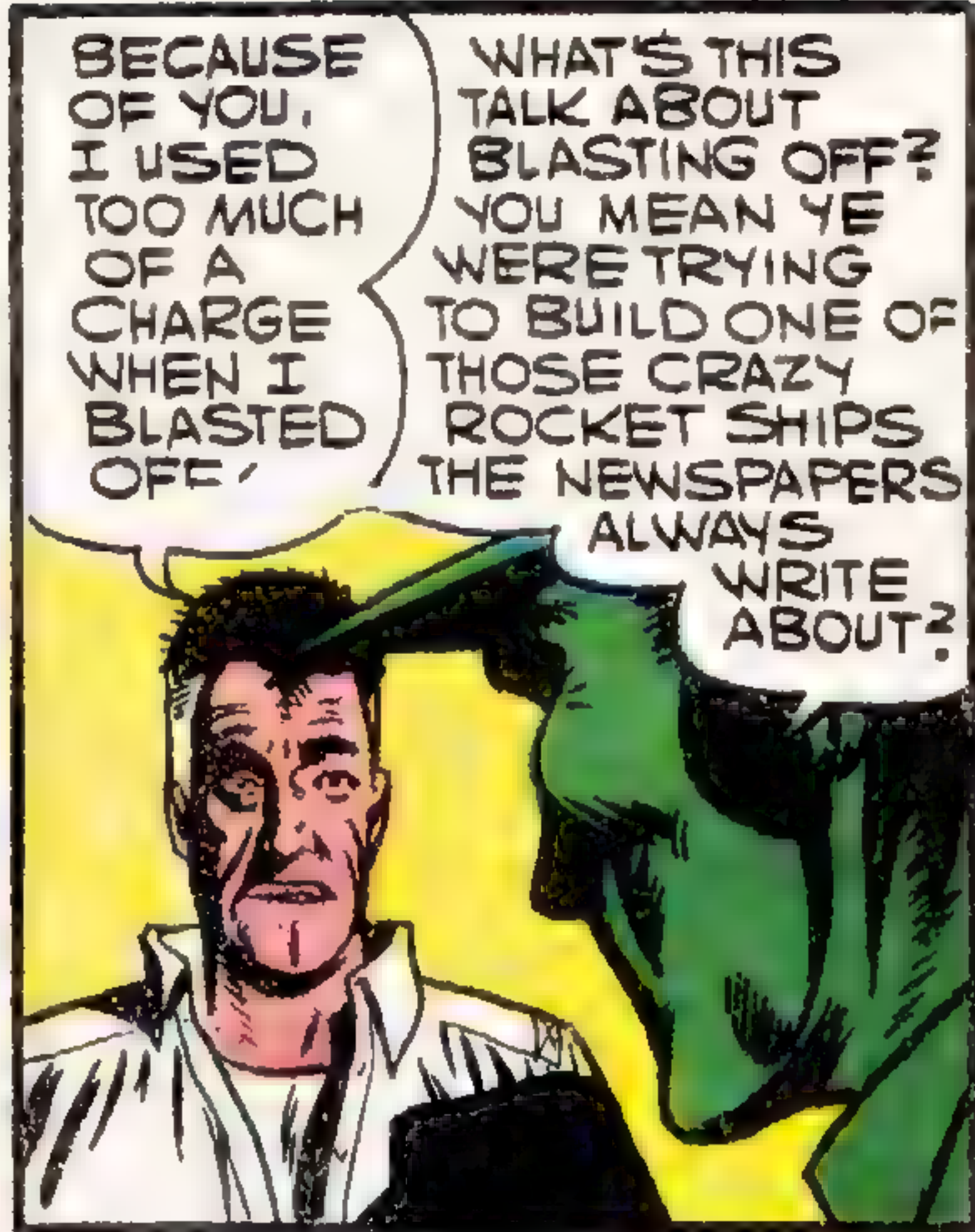
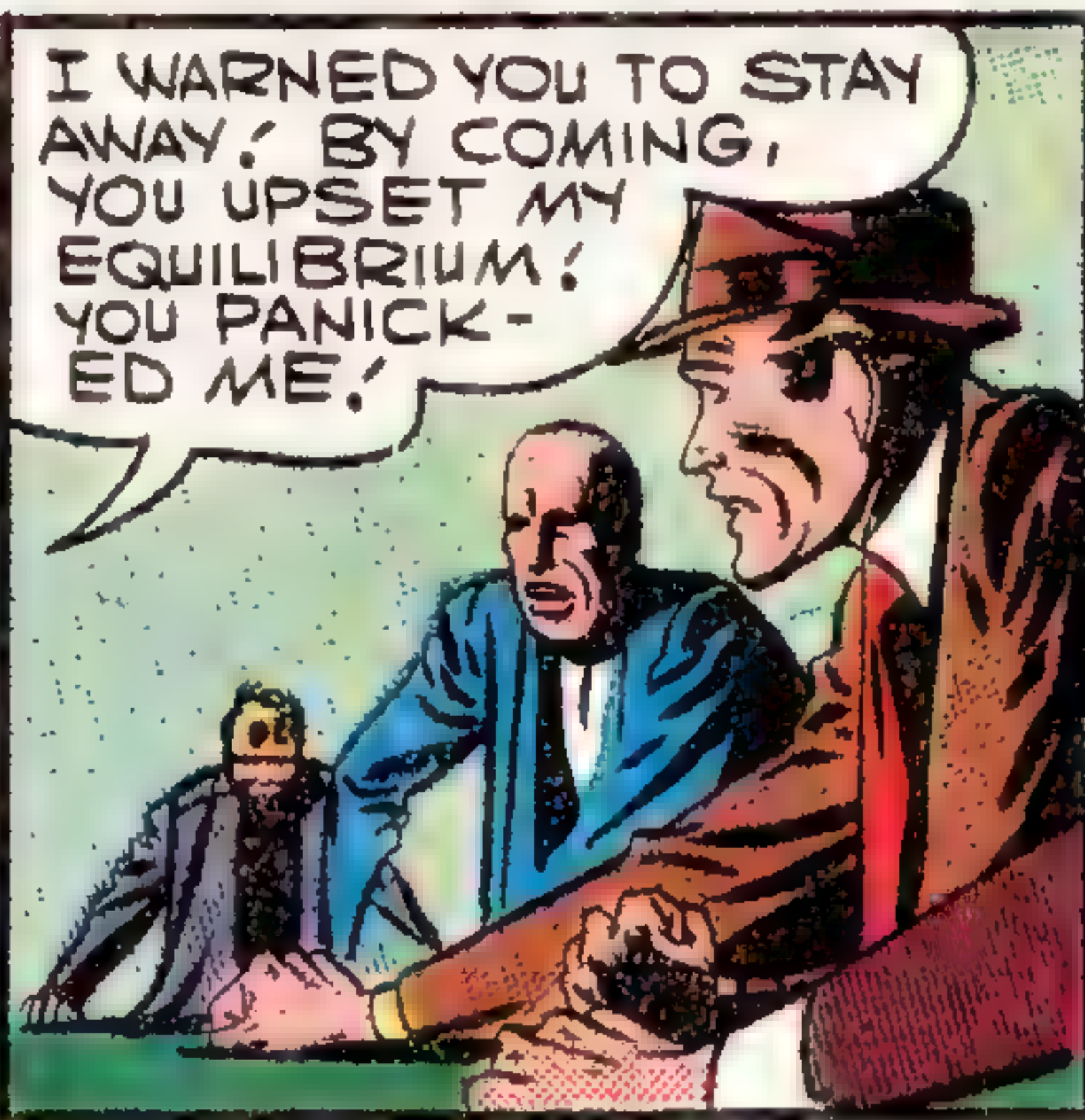


SO THAT'S WHAT WE HAD IN MIND NOW! EVERY LAST PERSON IN HAWKIN'S JUNCTION WAS THERE! ALL OF US, MOVING CLOSER AND CLOSER! AND THEN...





NOBODY WAS HURT! BUT WE WERE MORE THAN A LITTLE STUNNED WHEN WE MANAGED TO OPEN OUR EYES...



END



UNUSUAL TALES

Extraordinary Stories Never Before Told



UNUSUAL TALES

No 9

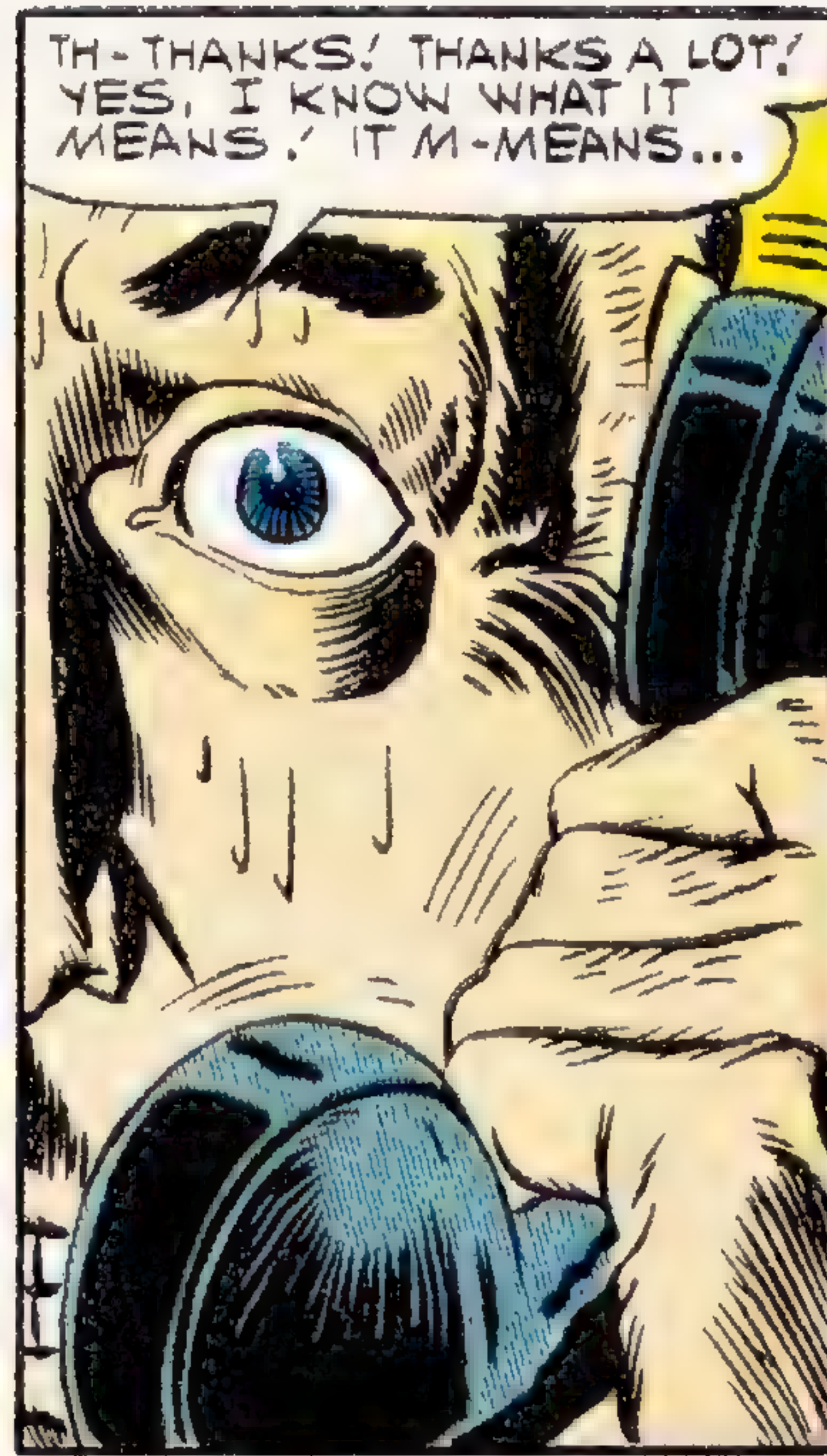
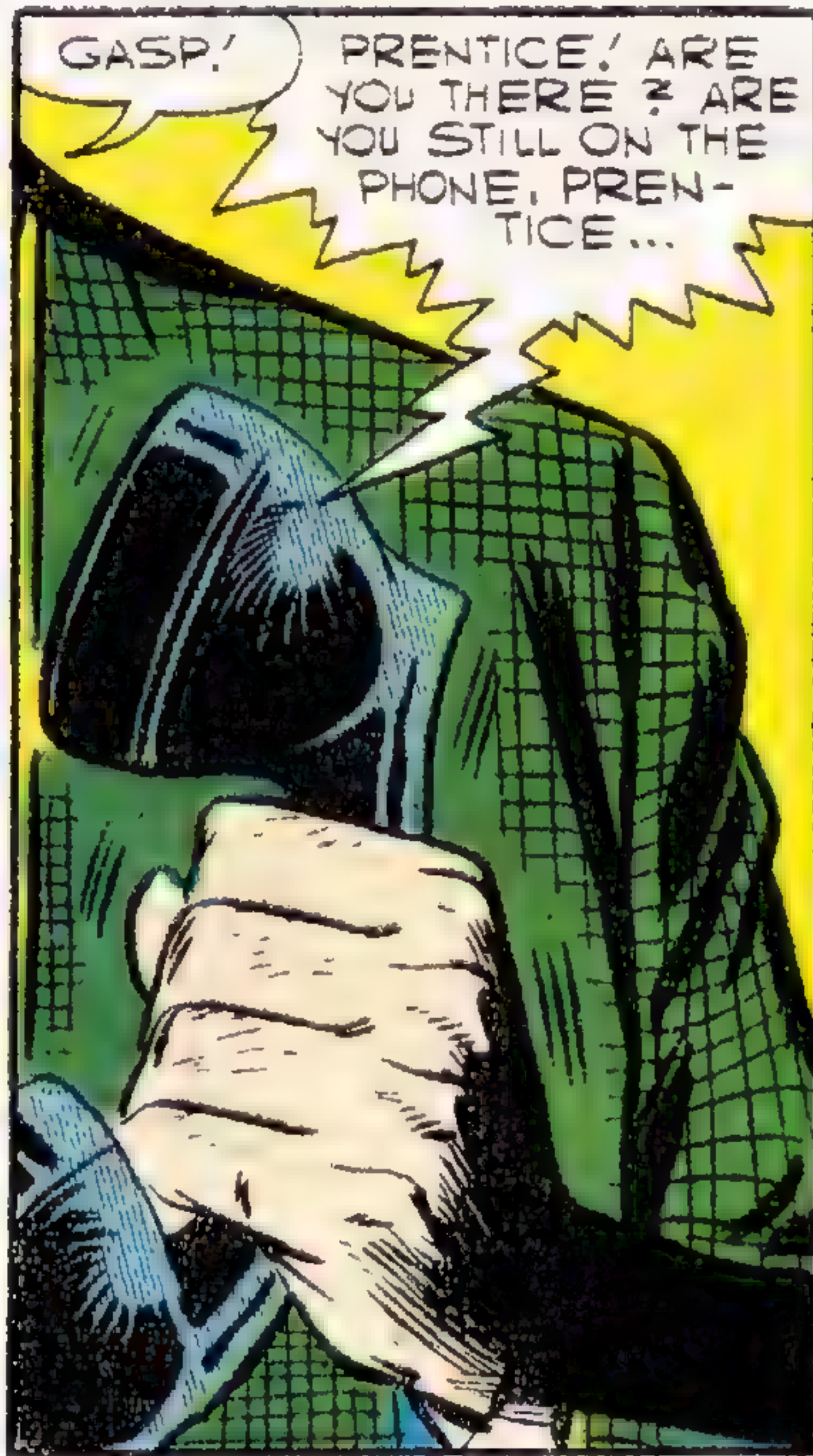
10¢

A CHARLTON PUBLICATION

WHAT WAS THE DREAD SECRET
BEHIND

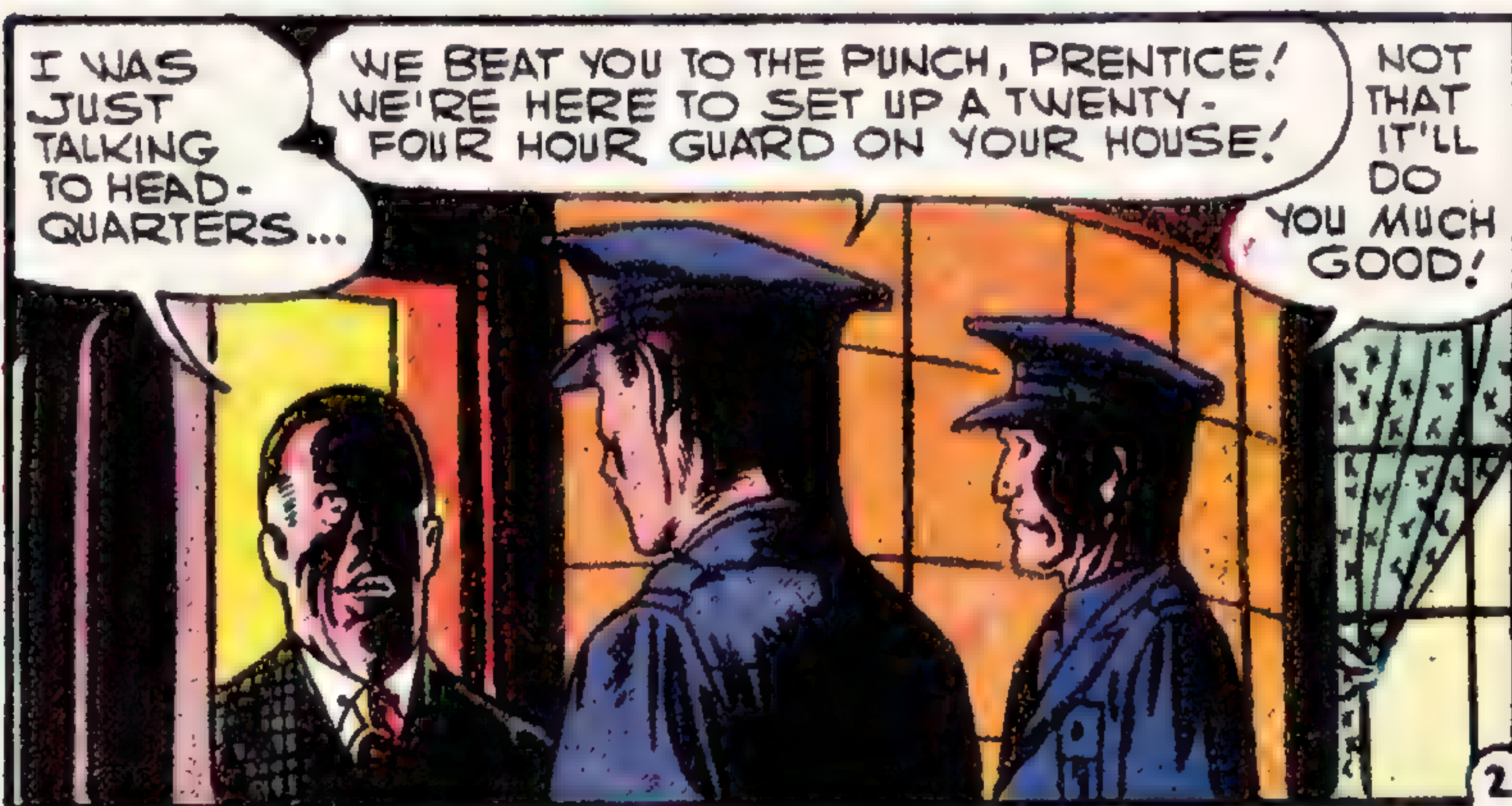
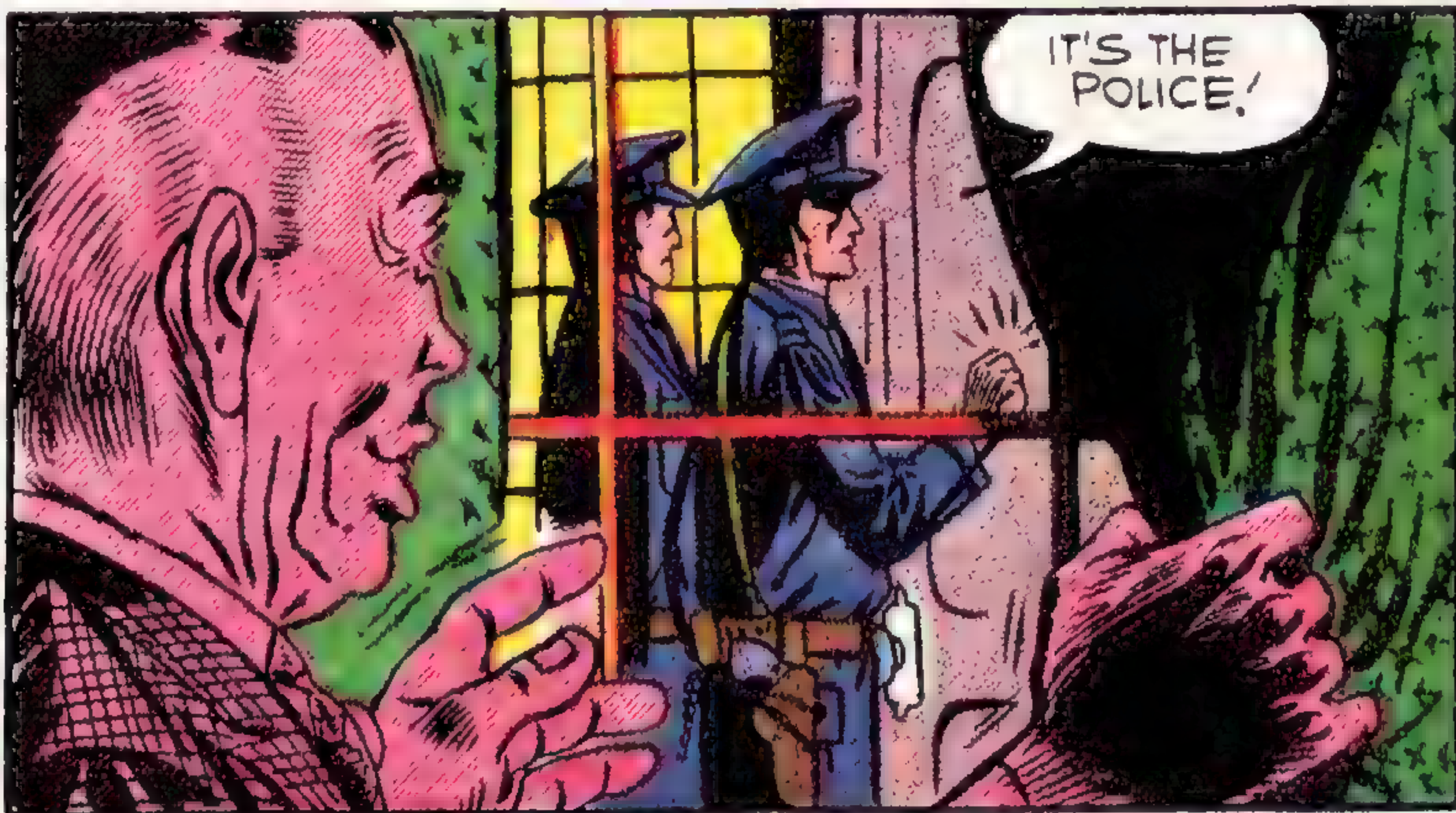
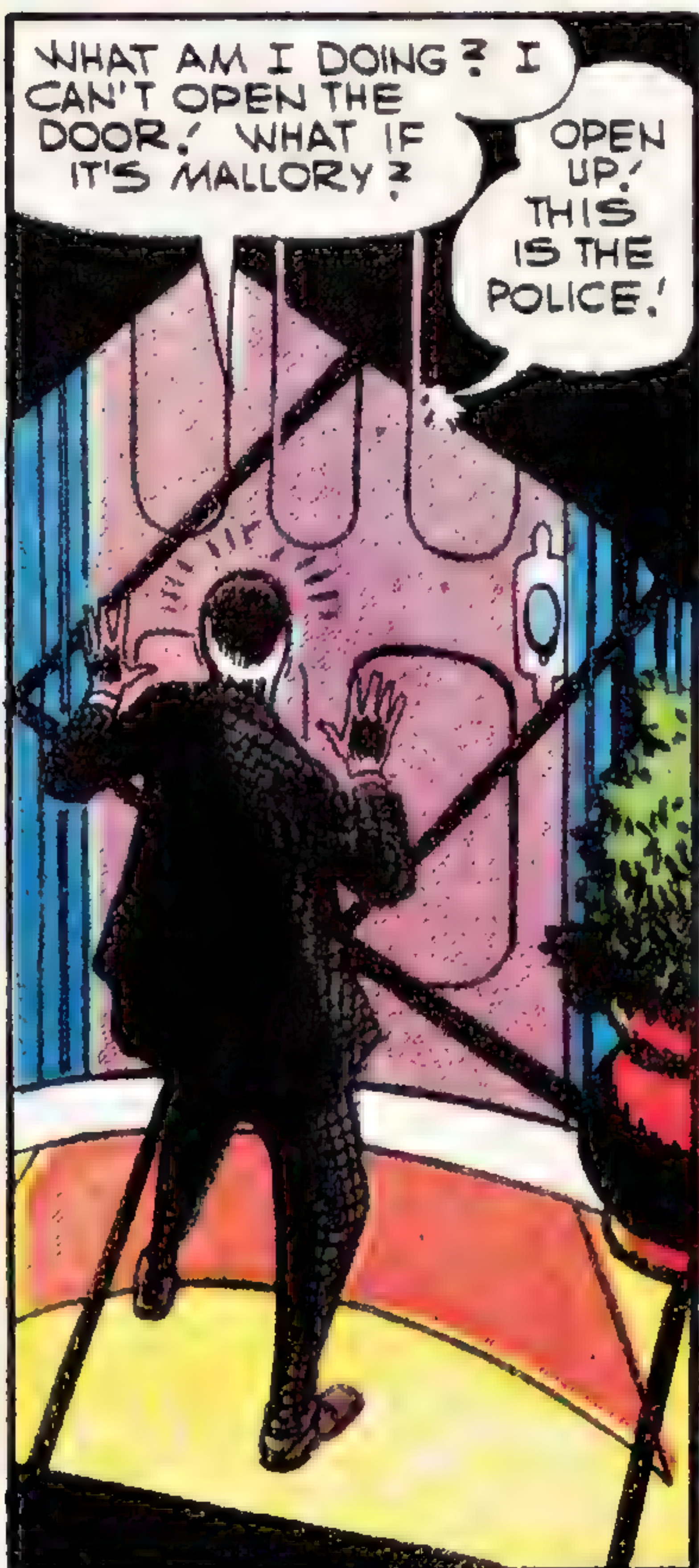
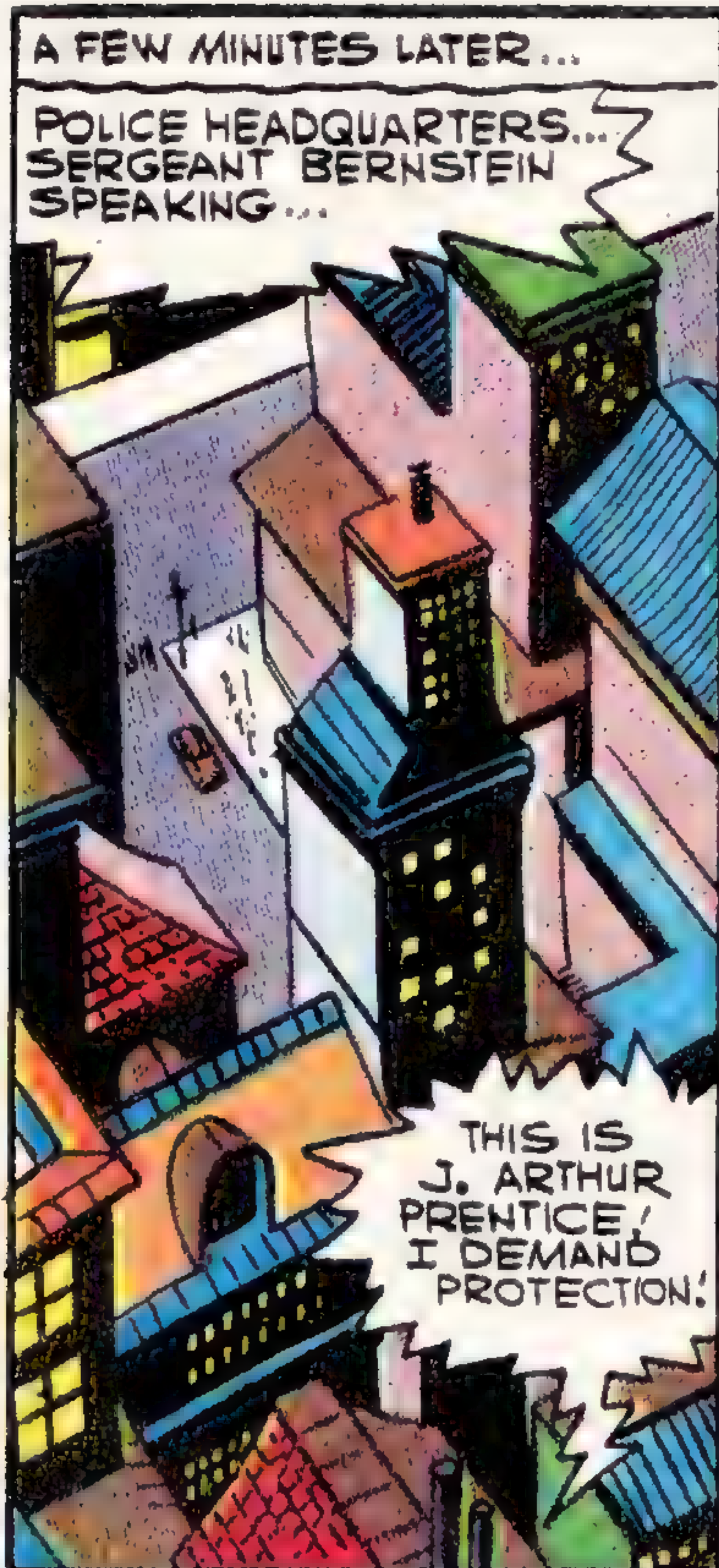
THE NIGHT OF
RED SNOW ?

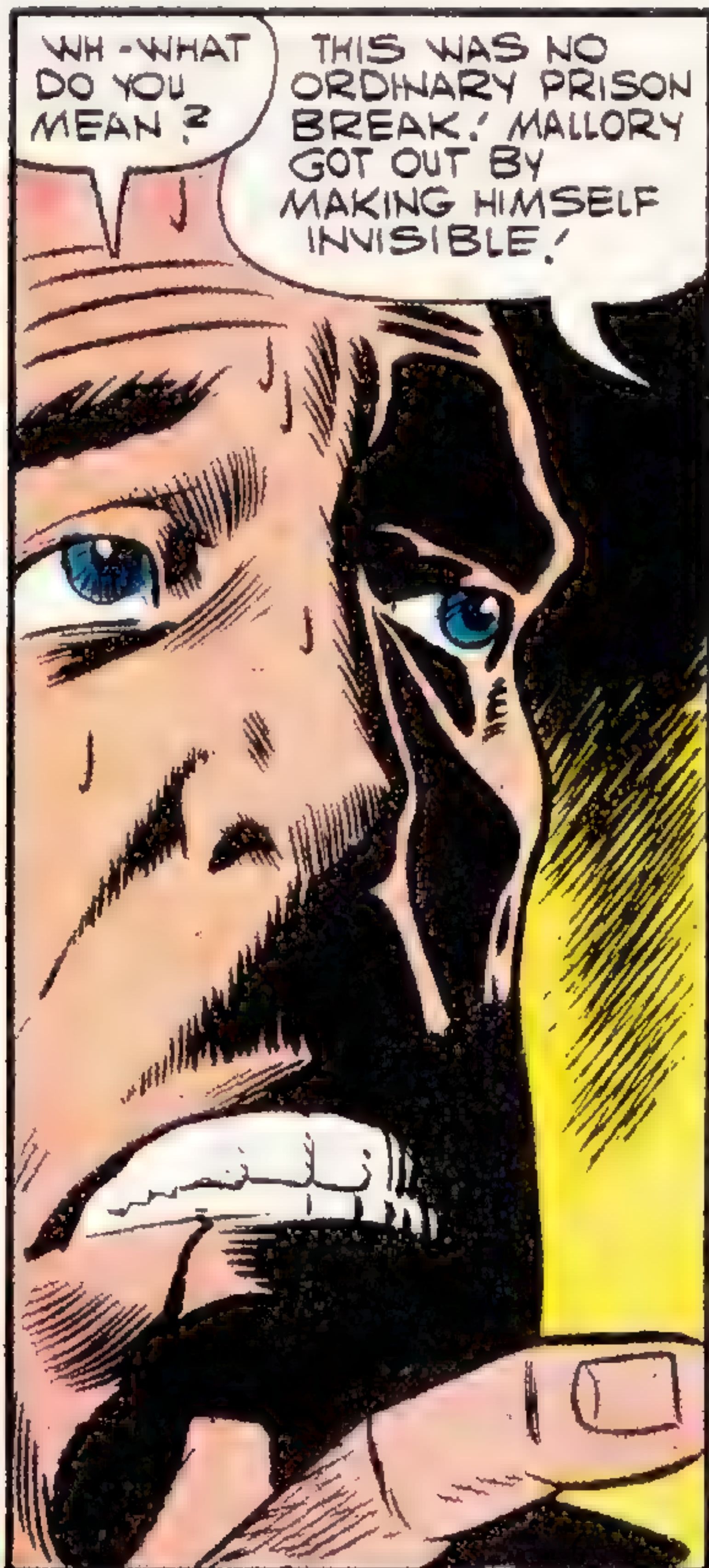




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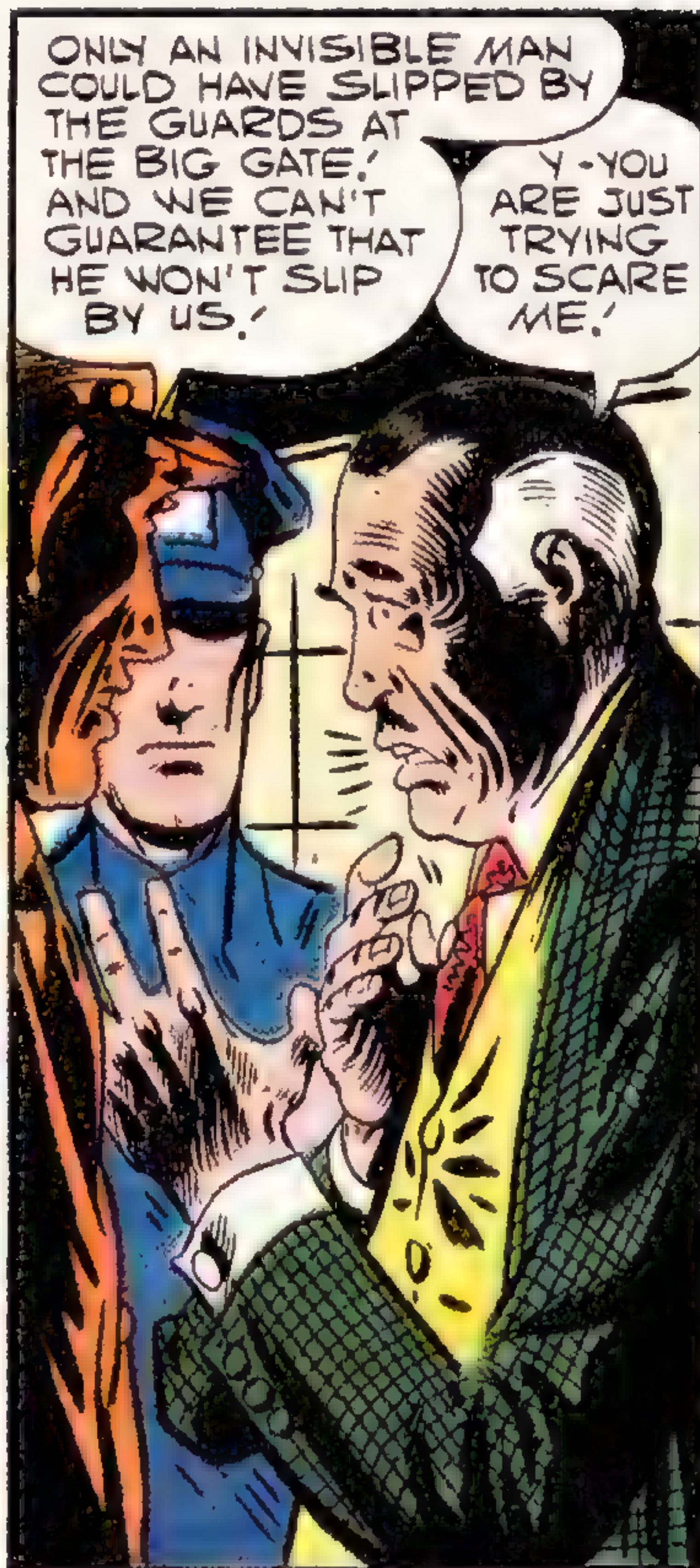
Pat Masulli Executive Editor





WH-WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

THIS WAS NO ORDINARY PRISON BREAK! MALLORY GOT OUT BY MAKING HIMSELF INVISIBLE!

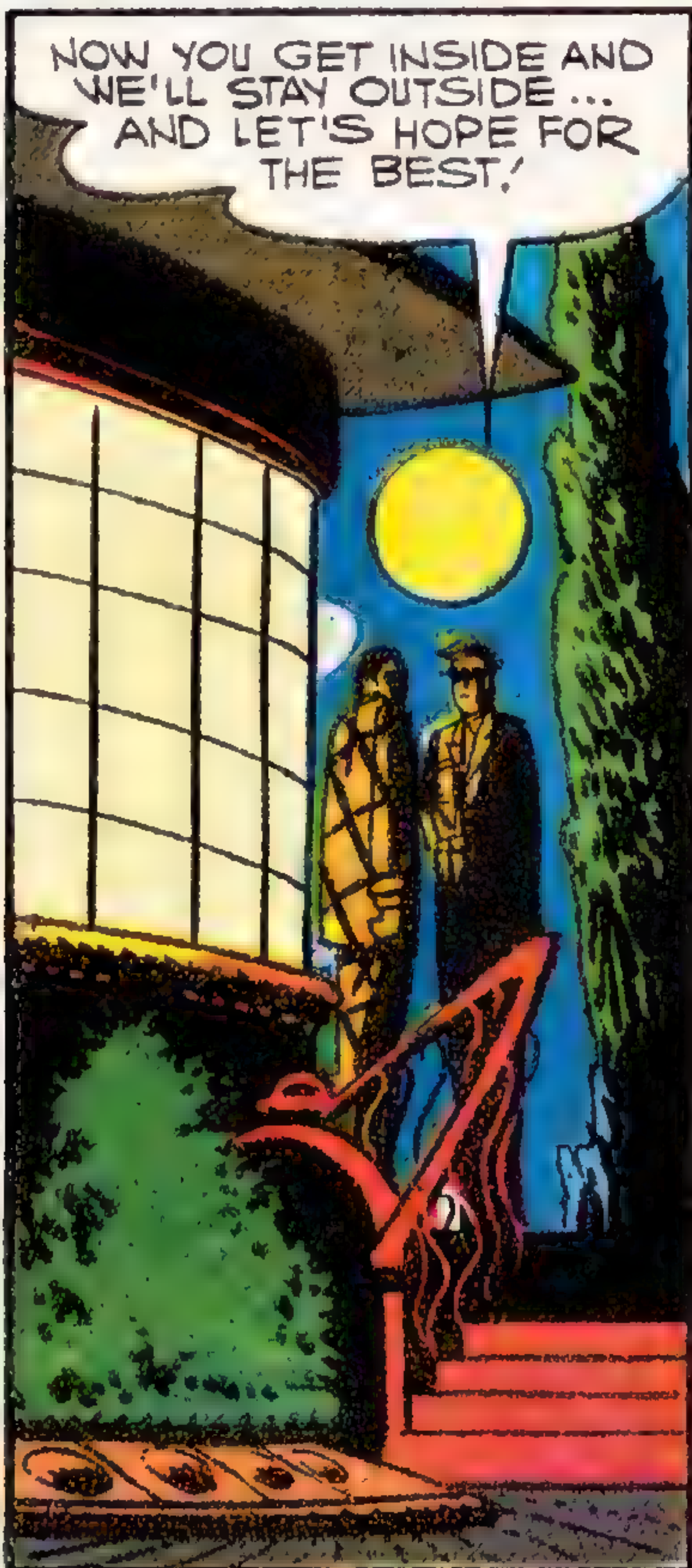


ONLY AN INVISIBLE MAN COULD HAVE SLIPPED BY THE GUARDS AT THE BIG GATE! AND WE CAN'T GUARANTEE THAT HE WON'T SLIP BY US!

Y-YOU ARE JUST TRYING TO SCARE ME!



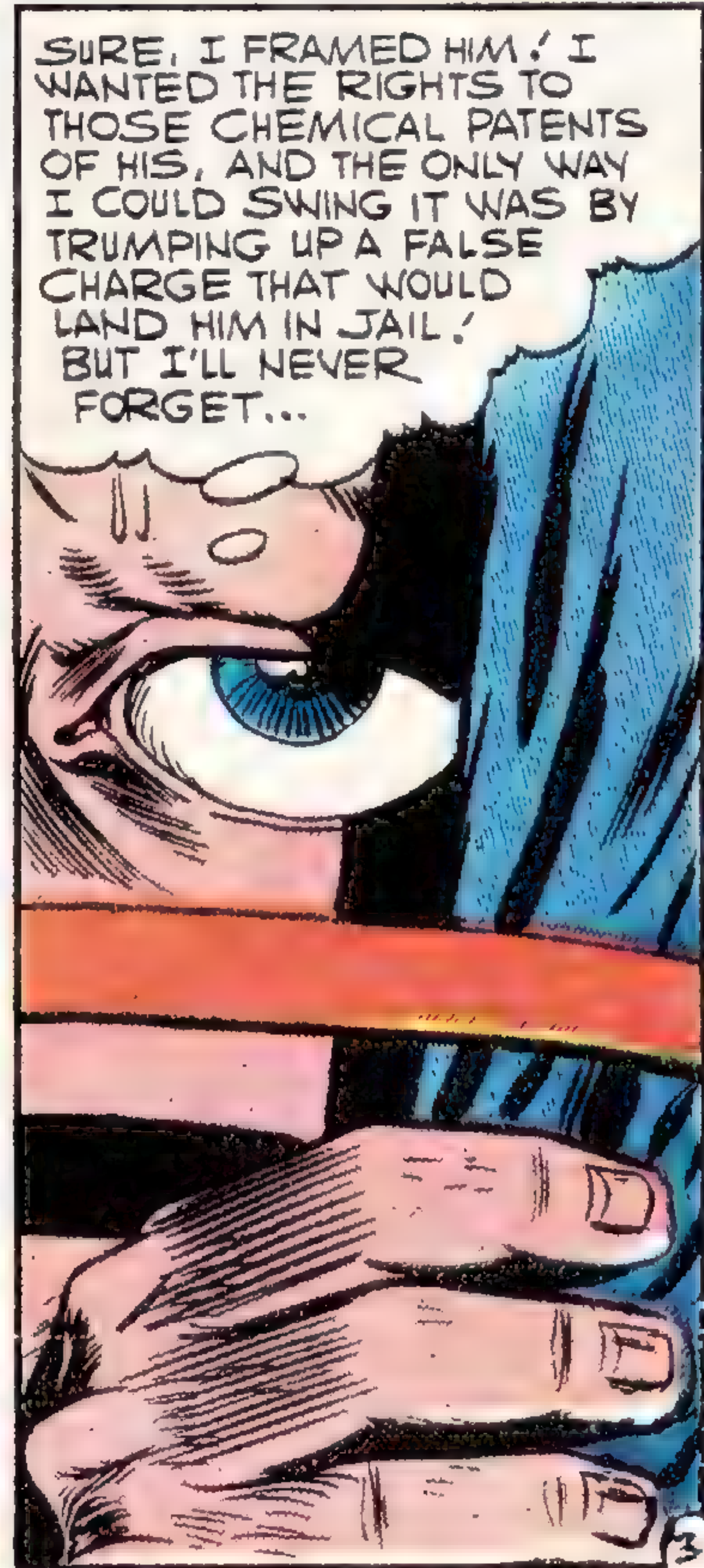
NO SIR, WE DON'T CRACK JOKE'S ABOUT THINGS LIKE THAT!



NOW YOU GET INSIDE AND WE'LL STAY OUTSIDE ... AND LET'S HOPE FOR THE BEST!



MALLORY'S COMING! THEY'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO STOP HIM! HE'LL (SOB) GET ME!



SURE, I FRAMED HIM! I WANTED THE RIGHTS TO THOSE CHEMICAL PATENTS OF HIS, AND THE ONLY WAY I COULD SWING IT WAS BY TRUMPING UP A FALSE CHARGE THAT WOULD LAND HIM IN JAIL! BUT I'LL NEVER FORGET...

... WHAT THAT CRAZY
LITTLE CHEMIST
YELLED AS THEY
LED HIM AWAY...

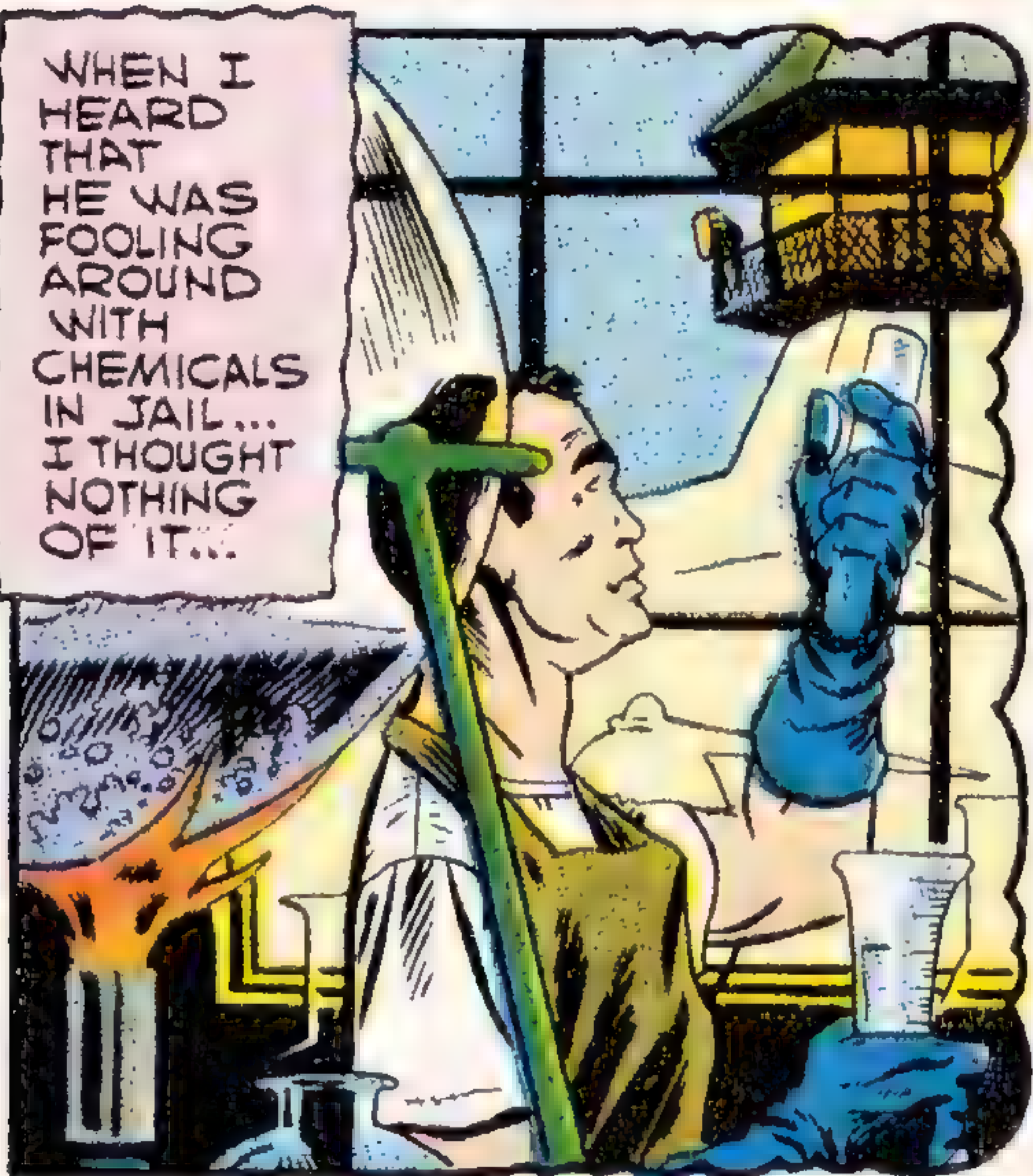


YOU DID THIS TO ME,
PRENTICE! BUT I'LL GET
OUT SOONER THAN
YOU THINK...

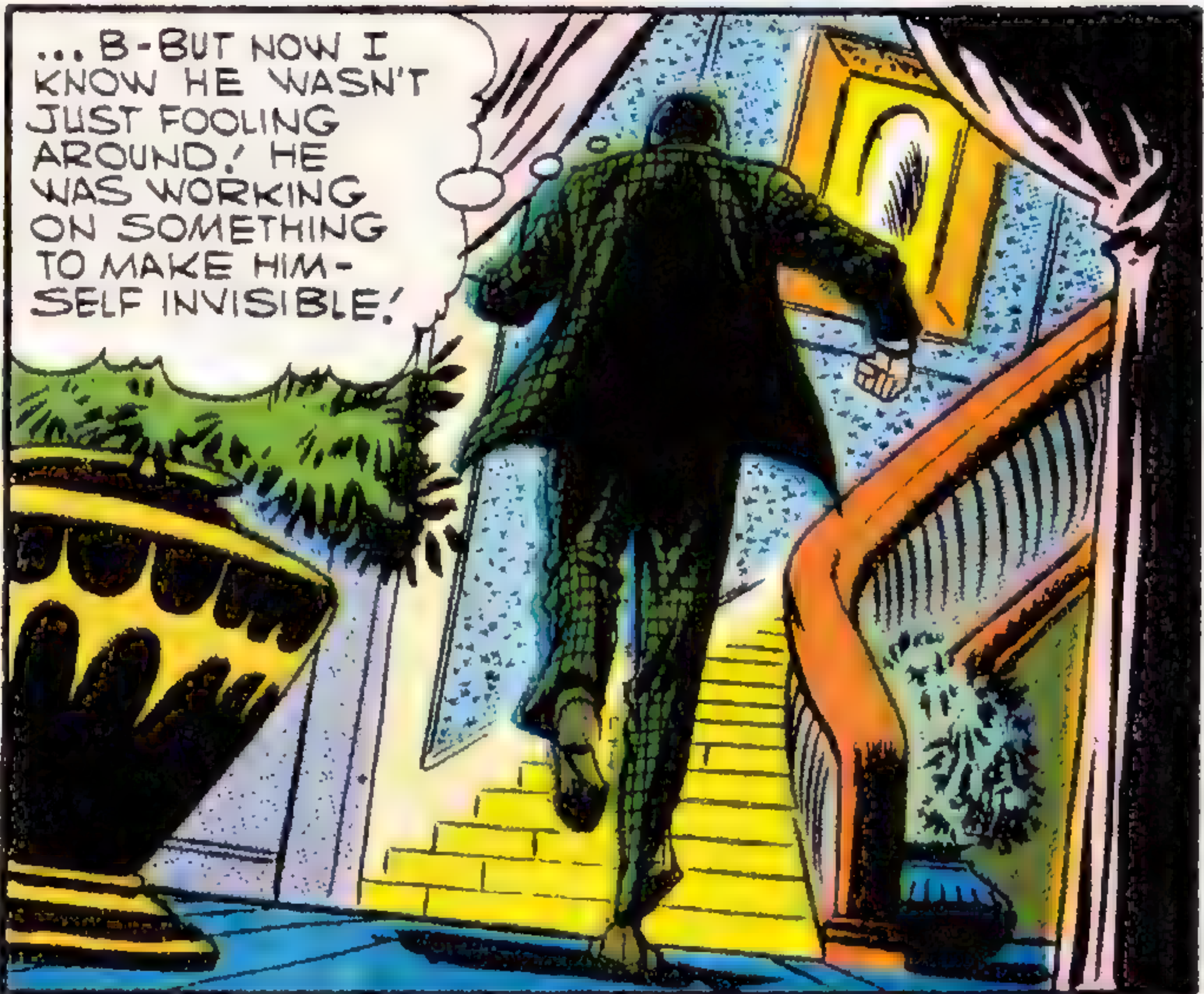
...AND I'LL COME BACK
FOR YOU! I'LL COME
FOR YOU, PRENTICE!



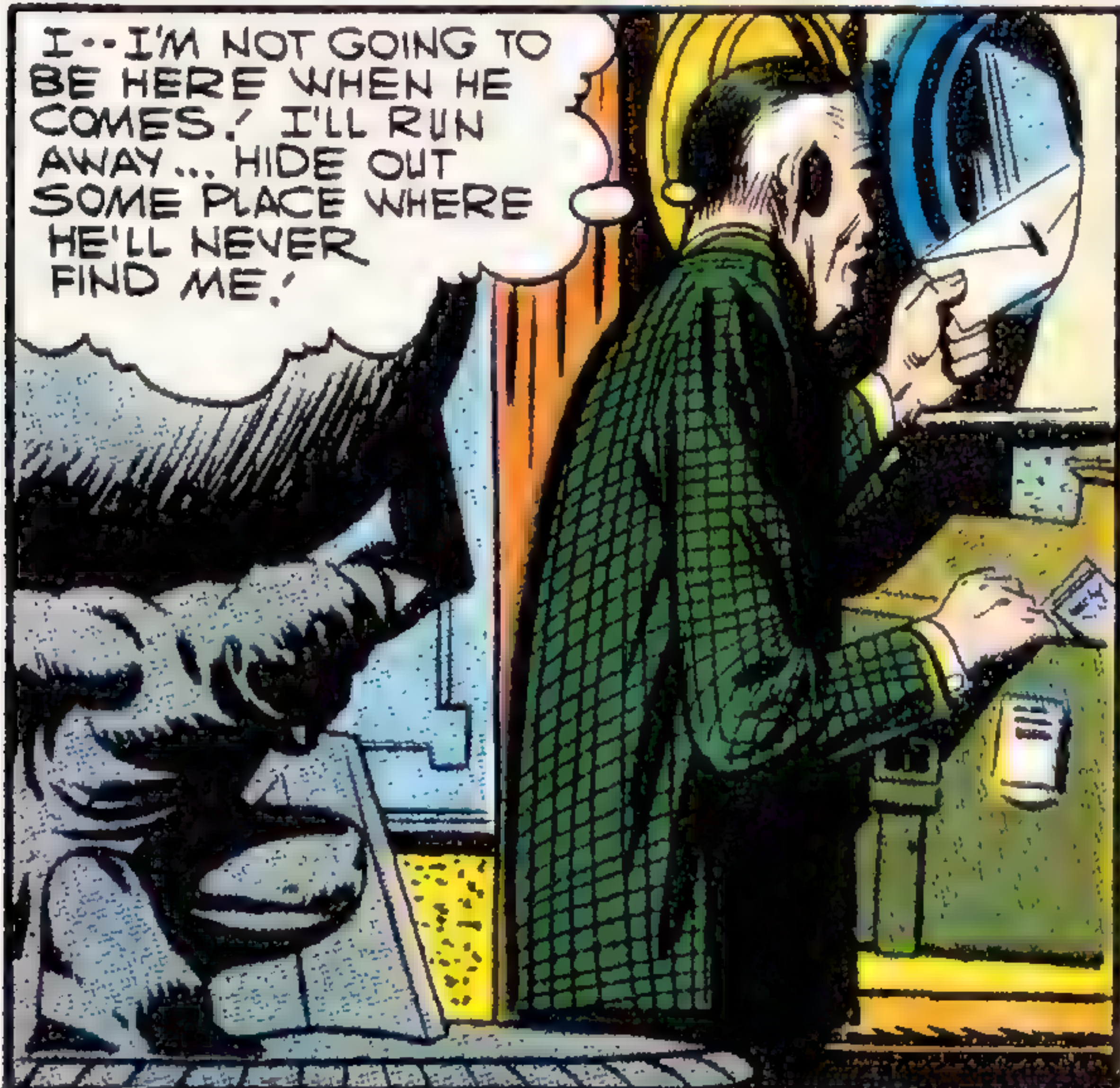
WHEN I
HEARD
THAT
HE WAS
FOOLING
AROUND
WITH
CHEMICALS
IN JAIL...
I THOUGHT
NOTHING
OF IT...



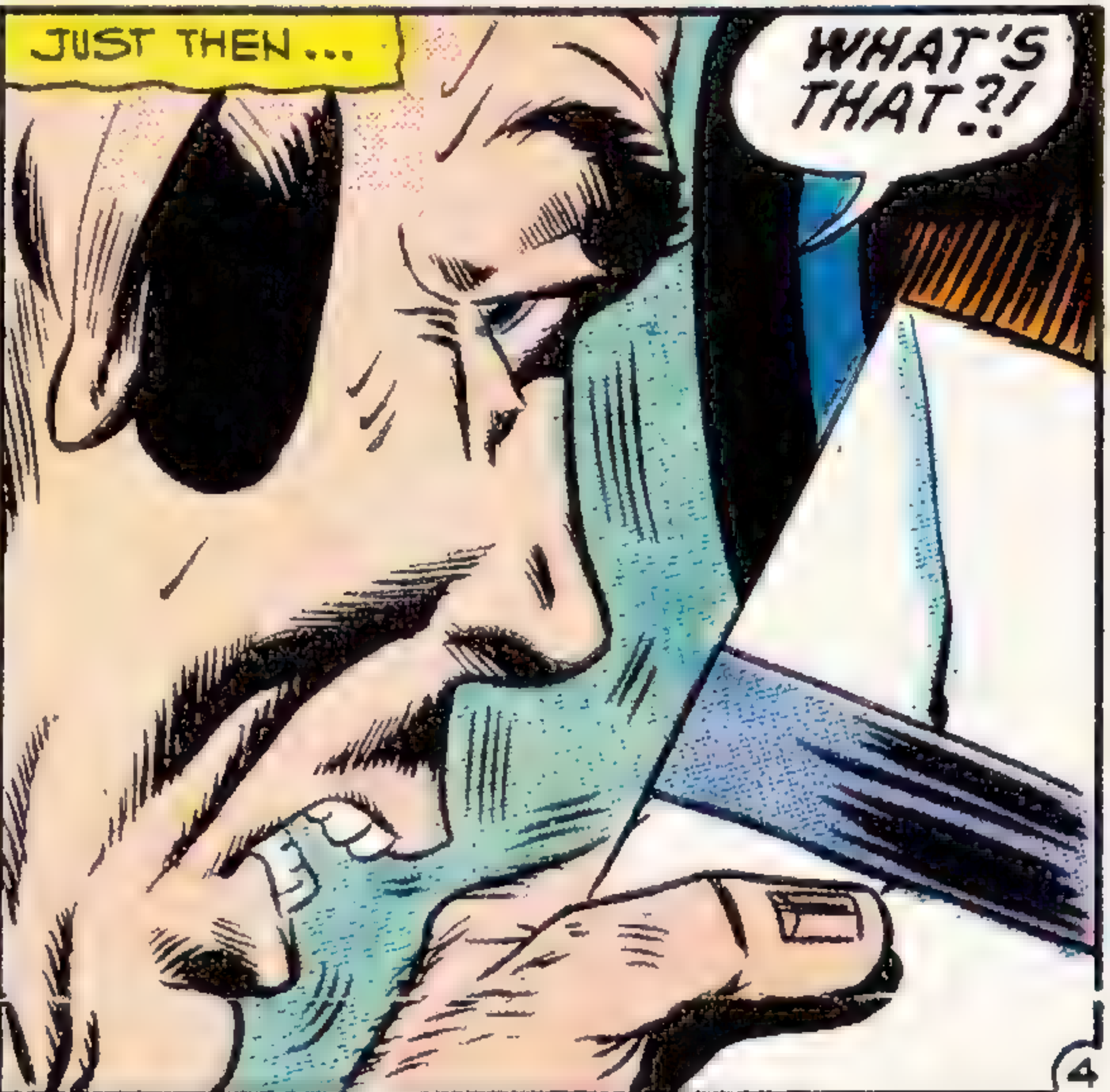
... B-BUT NOW I
KNOW HE WASN'T
JUST FOOLING
AROUND! HE
WAS WORKING
ON SOMETHING
TO MAKE HIM-
SELF INVISIBLE!



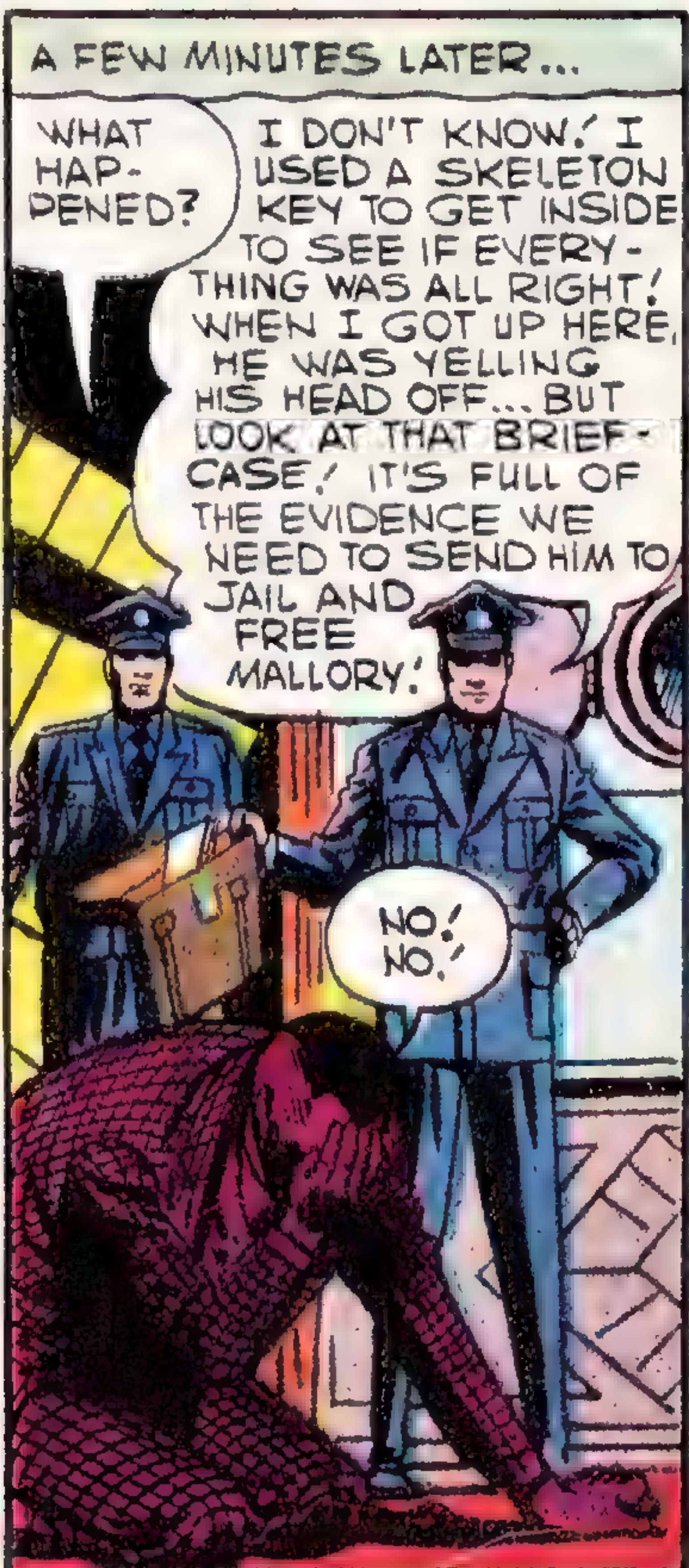
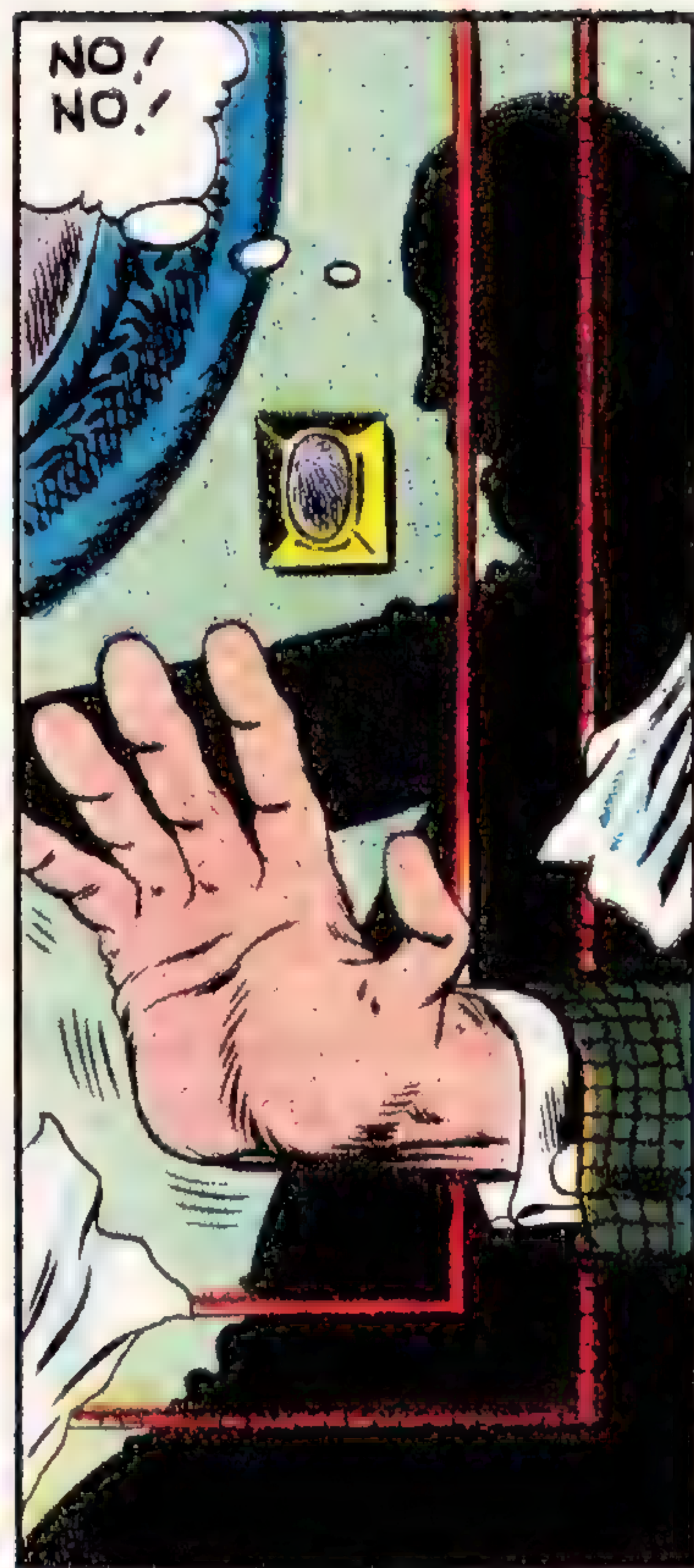
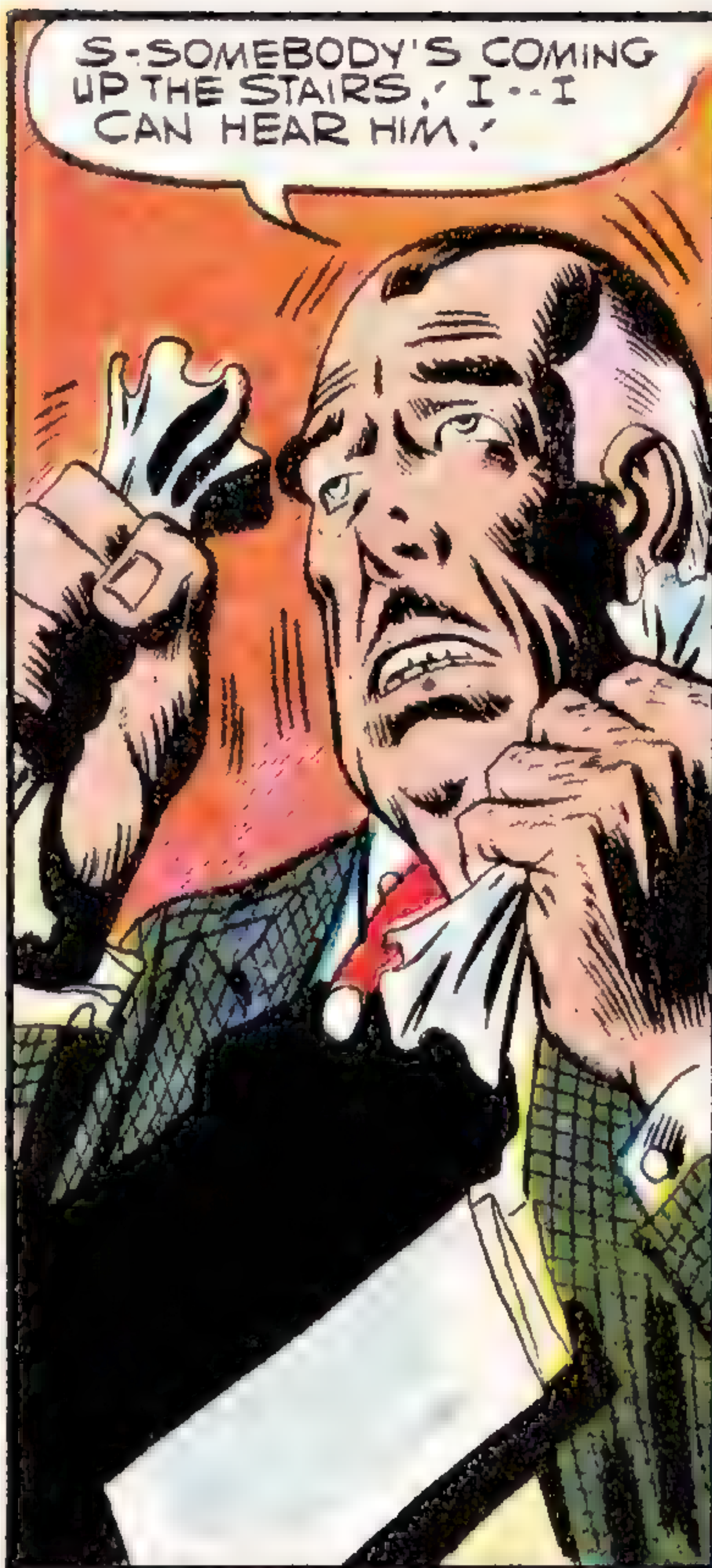
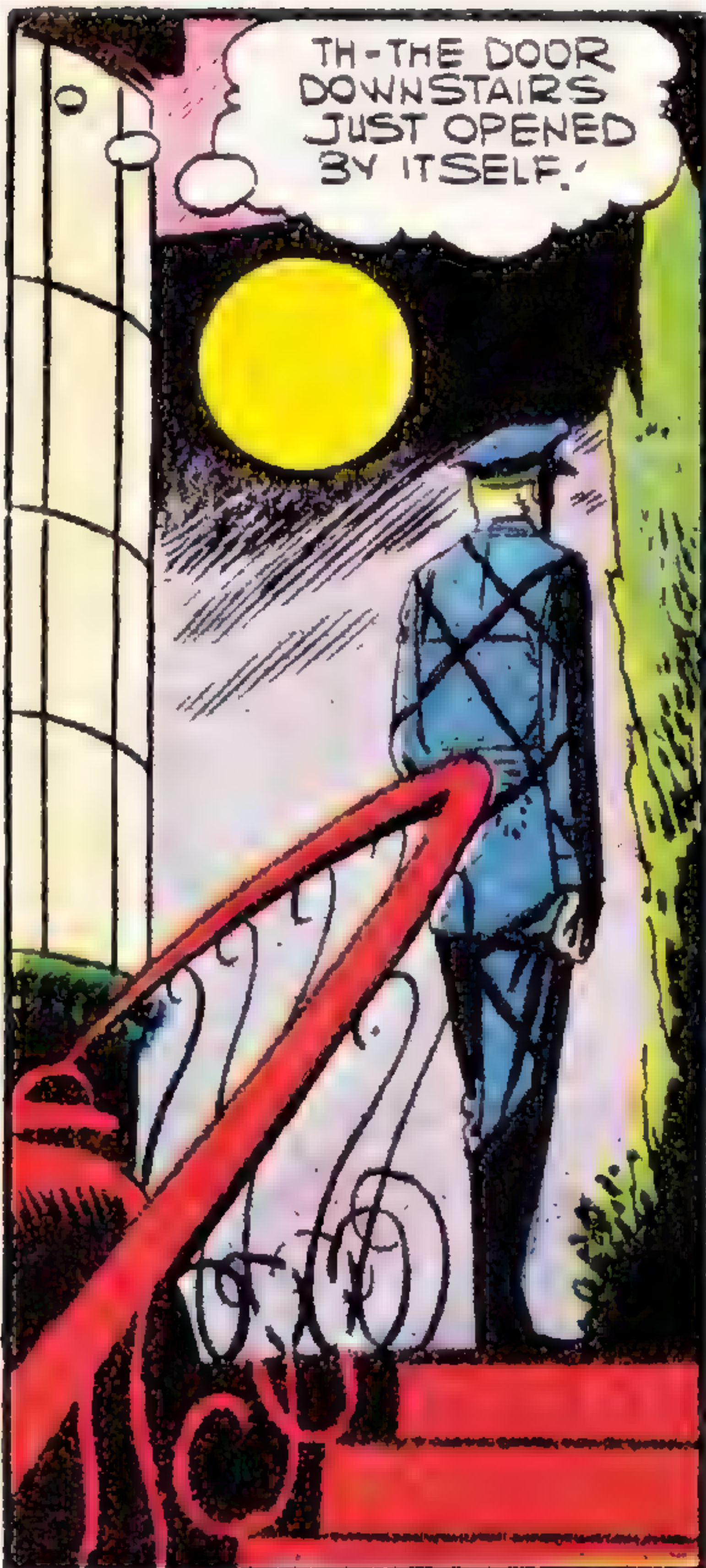
I--I'M NOT GOING TO
BE HERE WHEN HE
COMES! I'LL RUN
AWAY... HIDE OUT
SOME PLACE WHERE
HE'LL NEVER
FIND ME!



JUST THEN...



WHAT'S
THAT?!



I made a **VOLCANO**

IN THE STEAMING AMAZON JUNGLE... WHERE THE HEAT IS STIFLING AND INCESSANT... A MAN SOBS AND BEATS THE GROUND WITH HIS FISTS...

I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW MANY YEARS I'VE BEEN HIDING HERE! ONE DAY FOLLOWS ANOTHER WITH SUCH TERRIBLE SAMENESS THAT TIME BECOMES TANGLED! A MAN LOSES TRACK OF EVERYTHING! WHO HE WAS! WHAT HE DID...

ALL A MAN KNOWS IS THAT NOW HE IS (SOB) SLOWLY GOING MAD!



I SEEM TO REMEMBER THAT ONCE I TOOK GREAT JOY IN DESTRUCTION! "TO DESTROY THE OLD AND CORRUPT," I SEEM TO REMEMBER SAYING ONCE, "IS NECESSARY IF WE ARE TO BUILD THE NEW AND THE STRONG!"



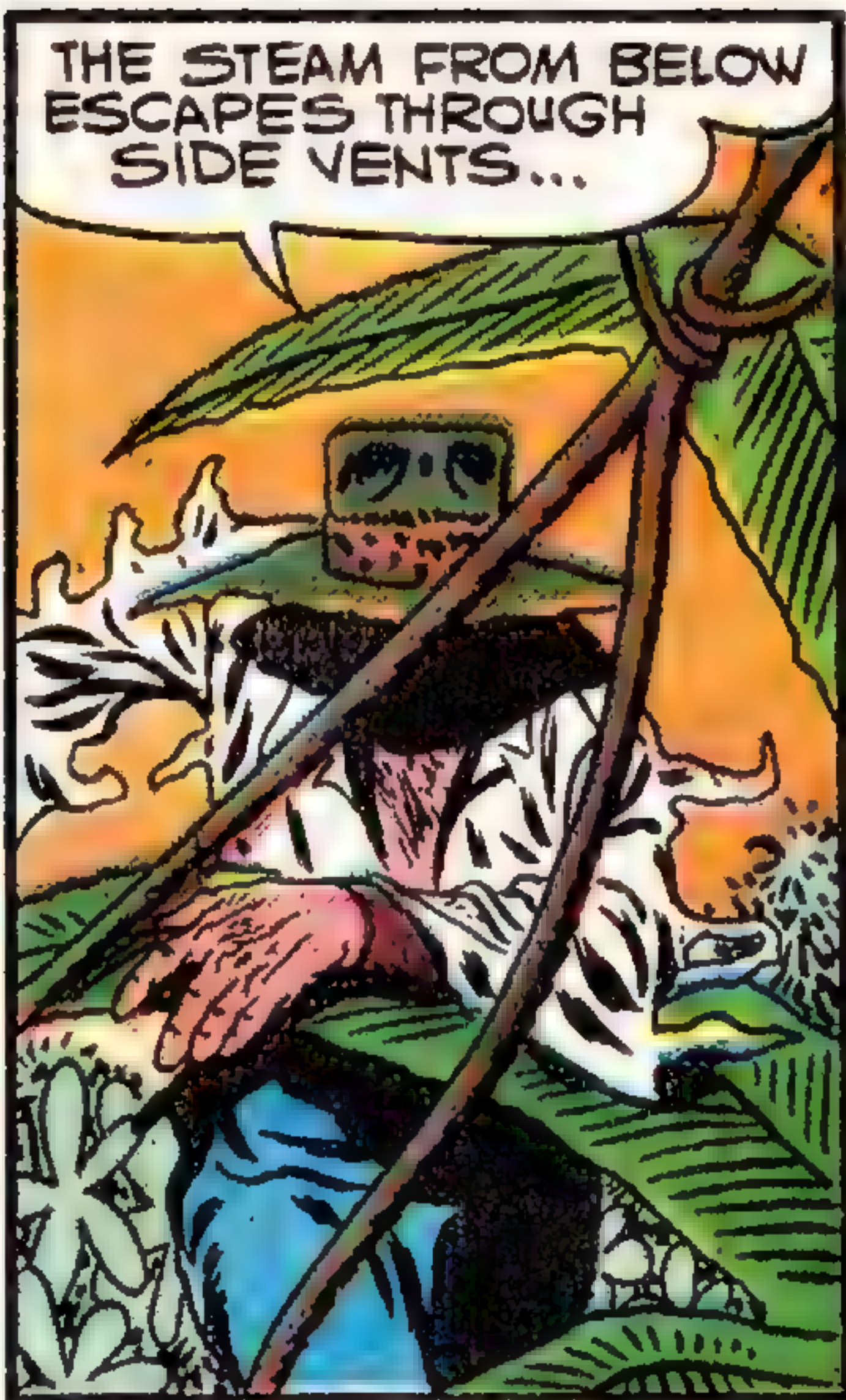
BUT THOSE WERE MERE WORDS... AN EXCUSE TO DESTROY... THE ONLY THING I LIVED FOR!



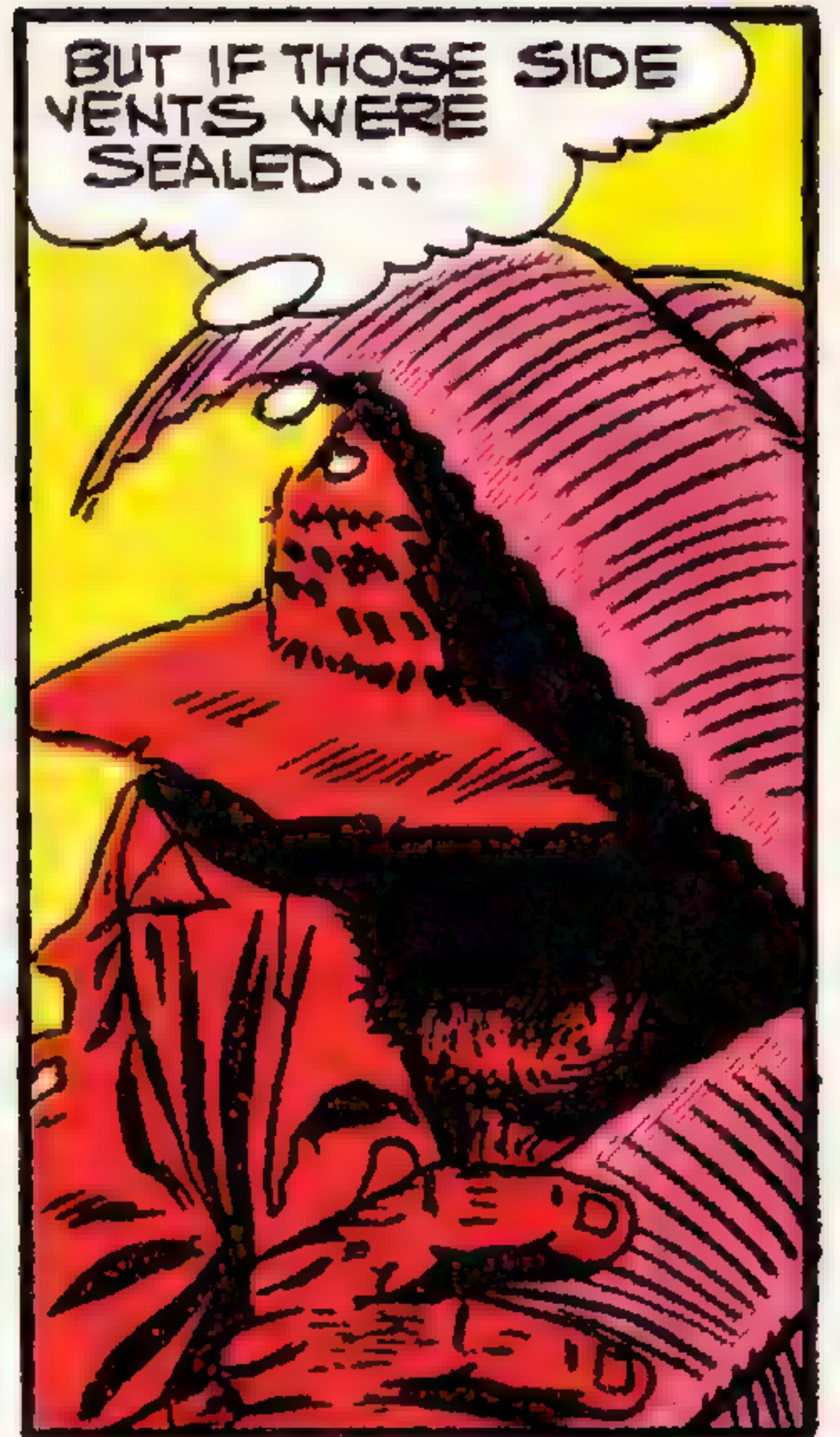
S. Ditko



IF I COULD ONLY..
HMMM... THAT
VOLCANO! THE
CRATER IS CORKED
WITH DEBRIS!
HMM... WHY
NOT ?



THE STEAM FROM BELOW
ESCAPES THROUGH
SIDE VENTS...



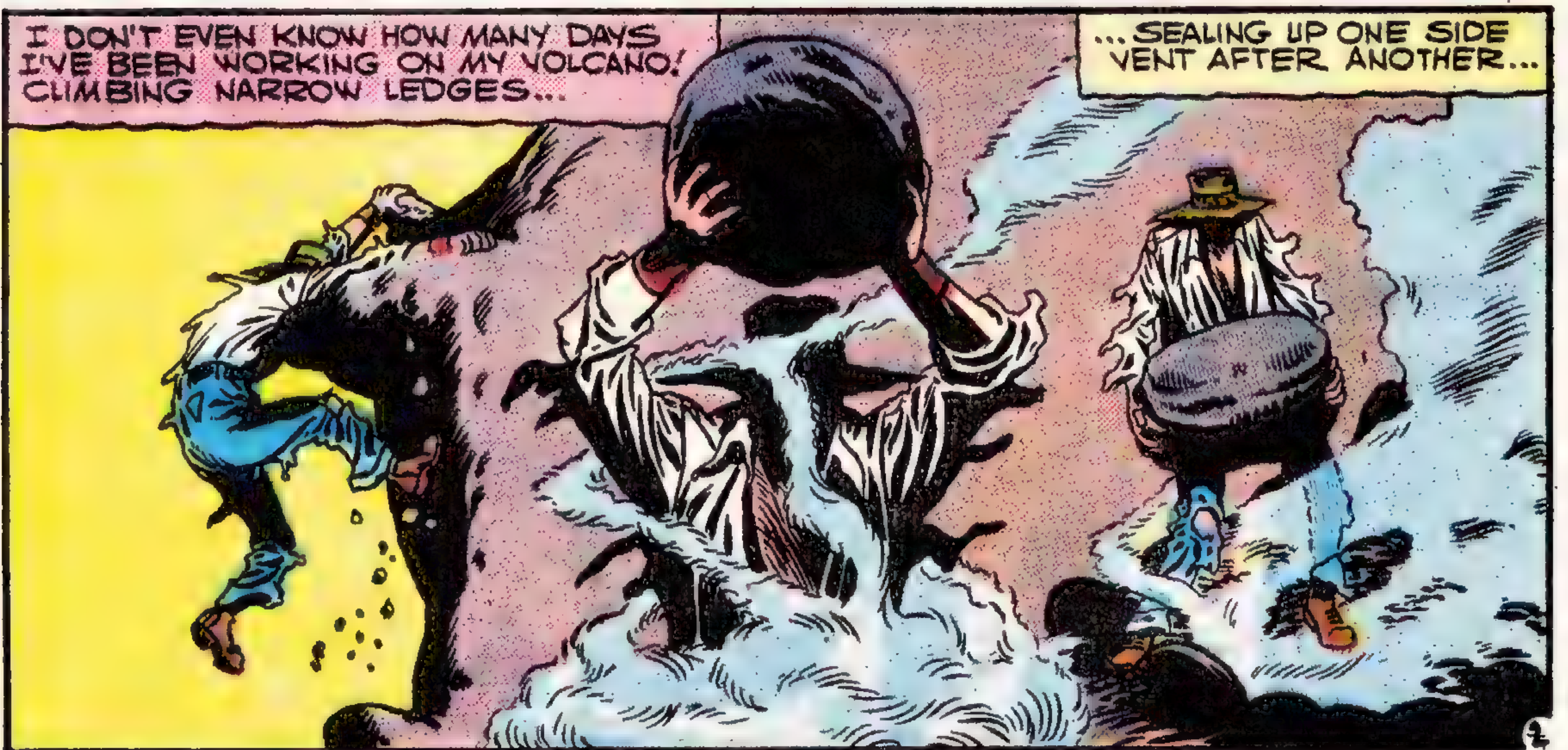
BUT IF THOSE SIDE
VENTS WERE
SEALED...



... ALL THE STEAM'S
PRESSURE WOULD BE
EXERTED ON THE
PLUGGED-UP CRATER!

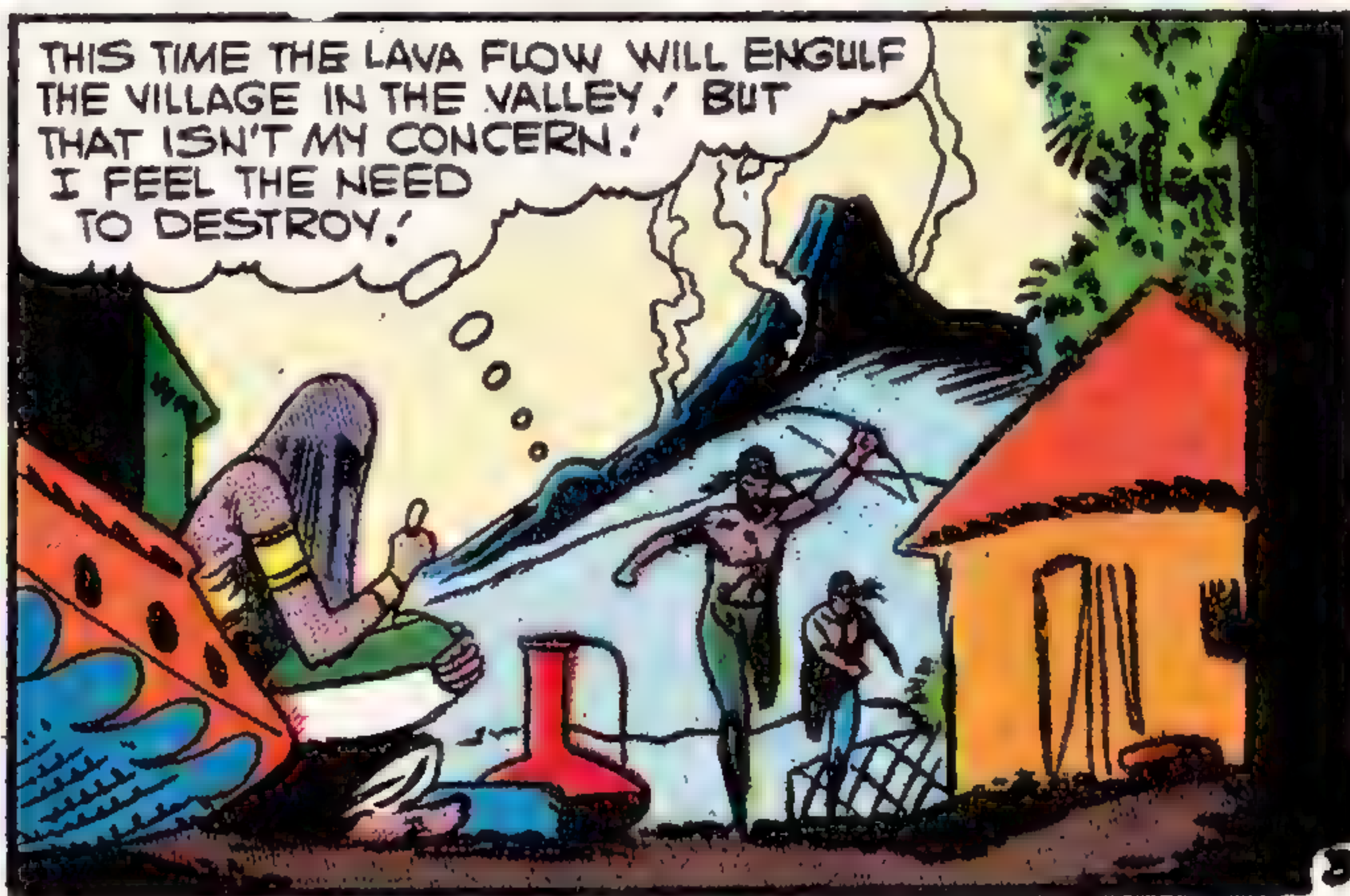
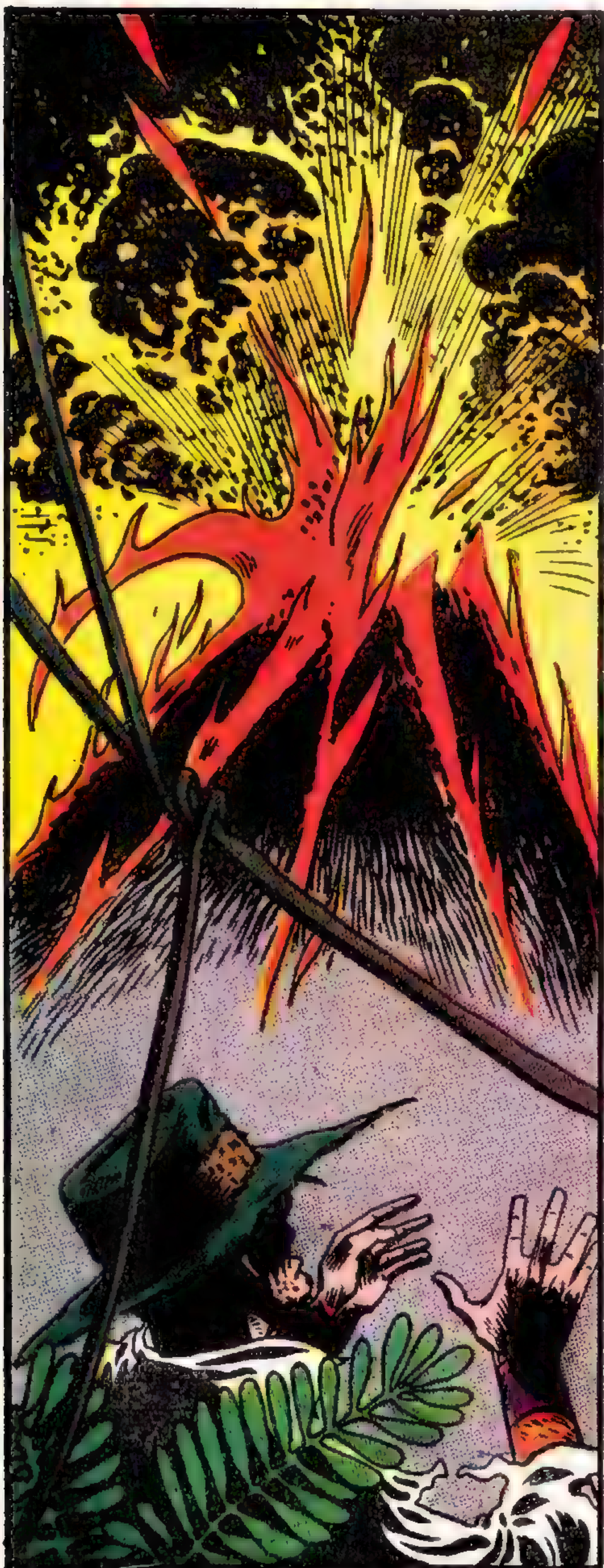
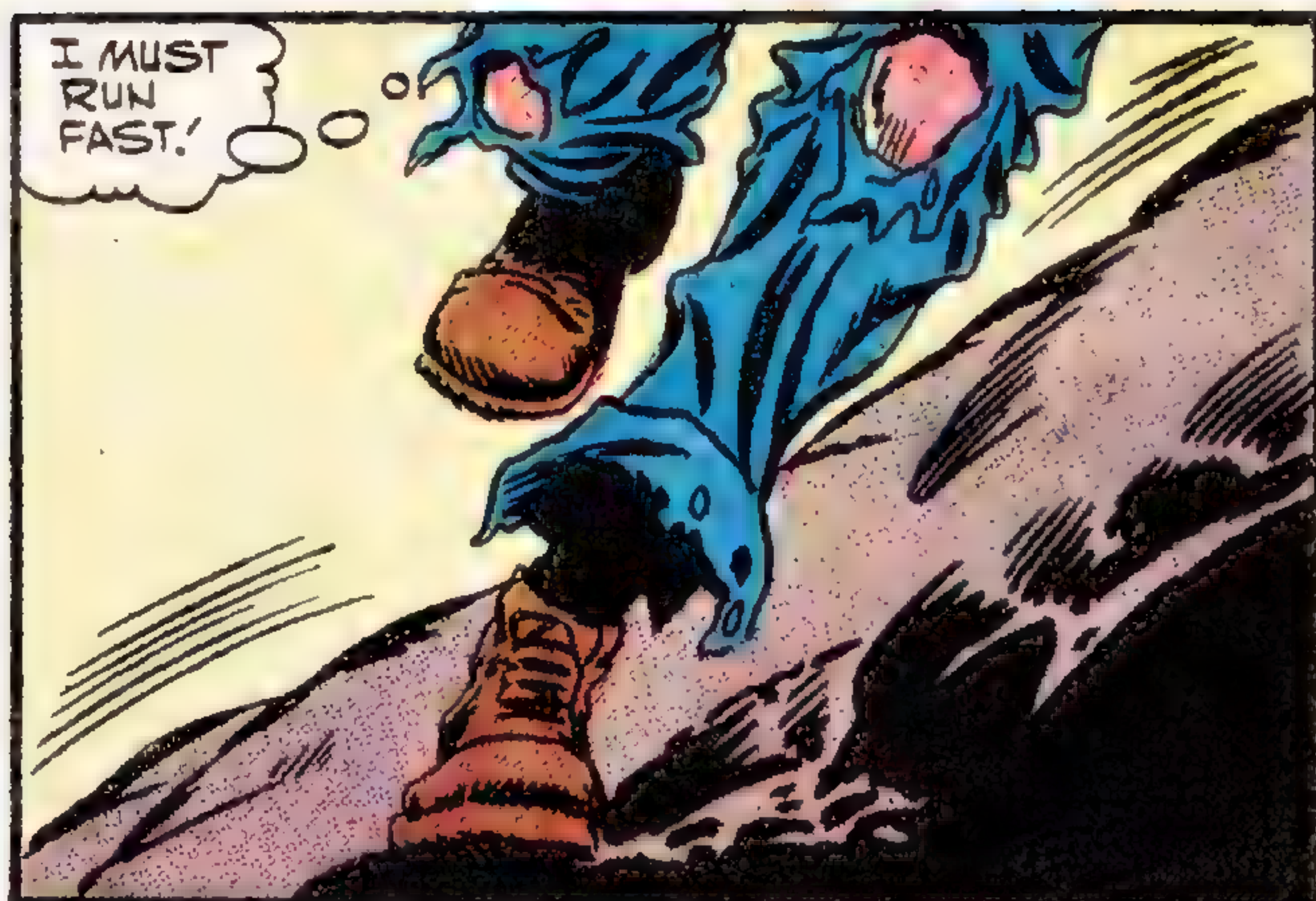
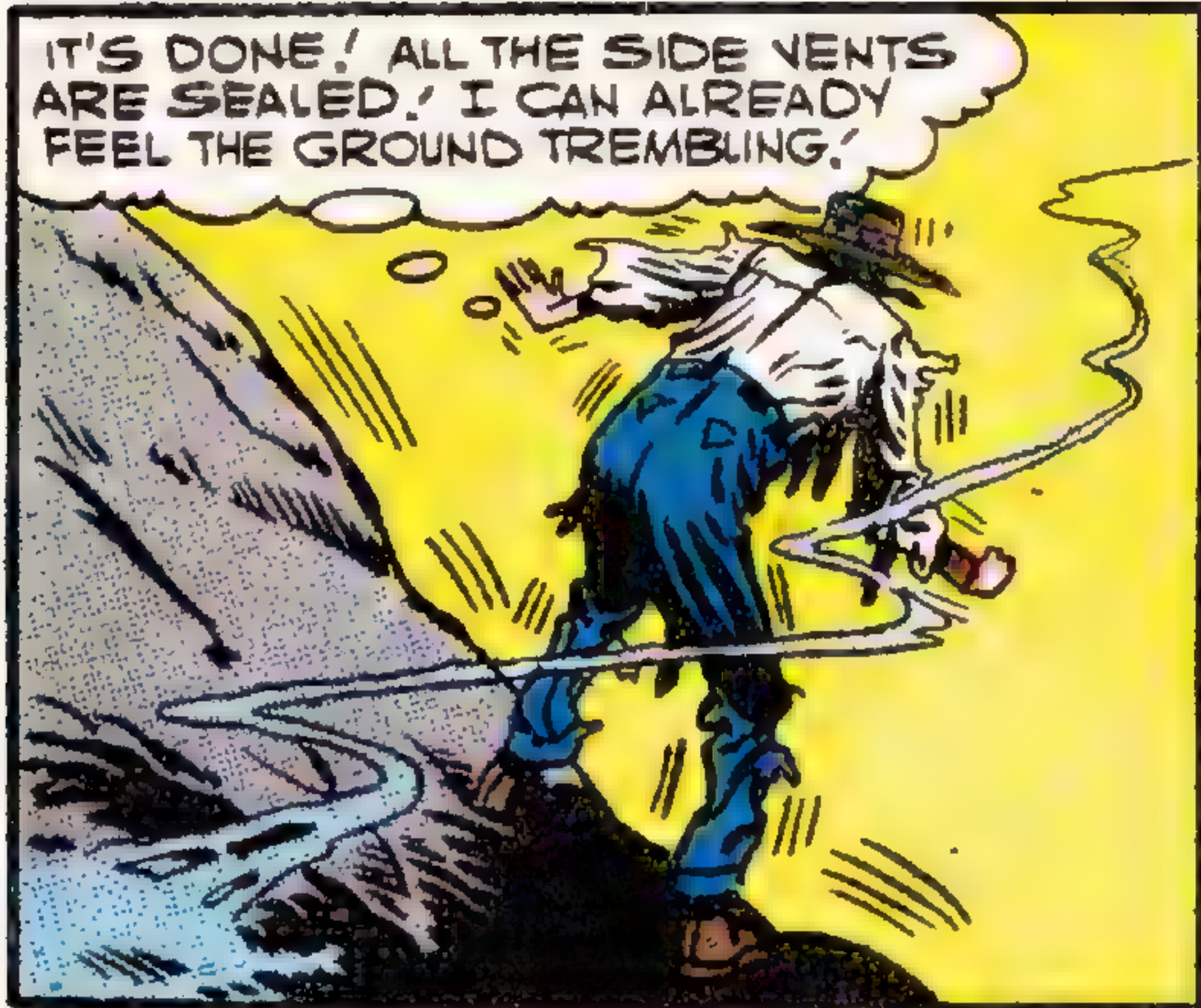


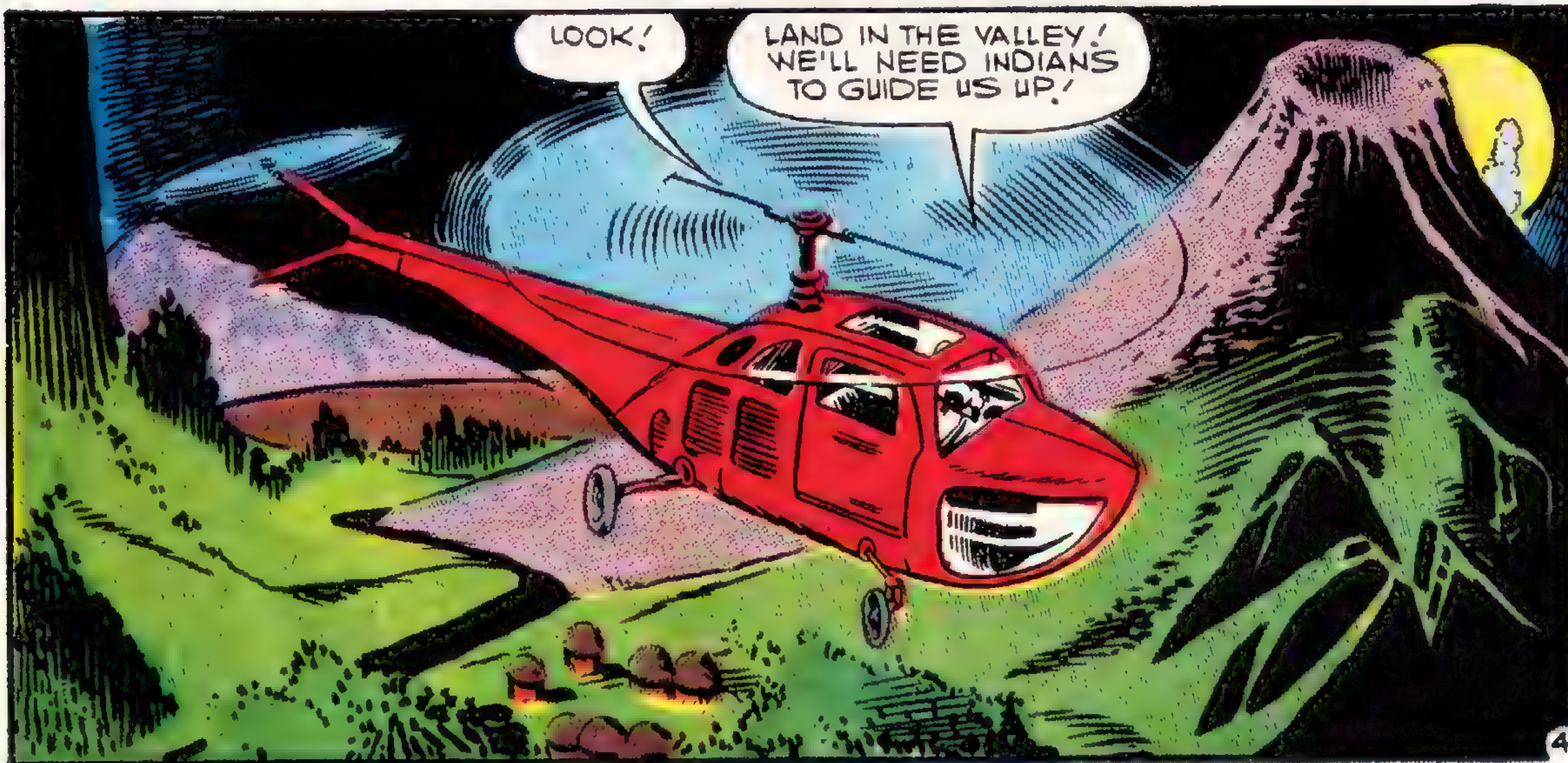
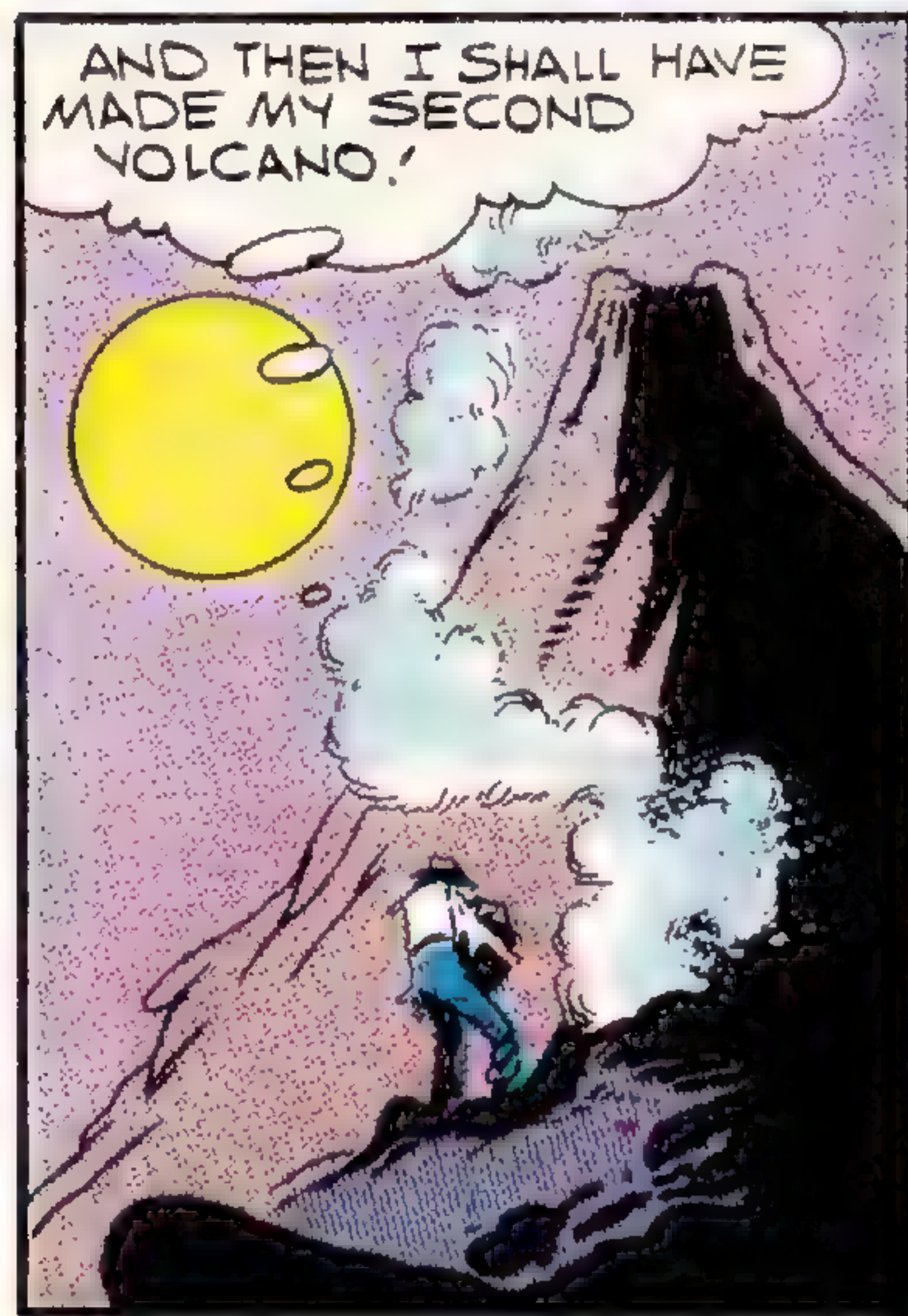
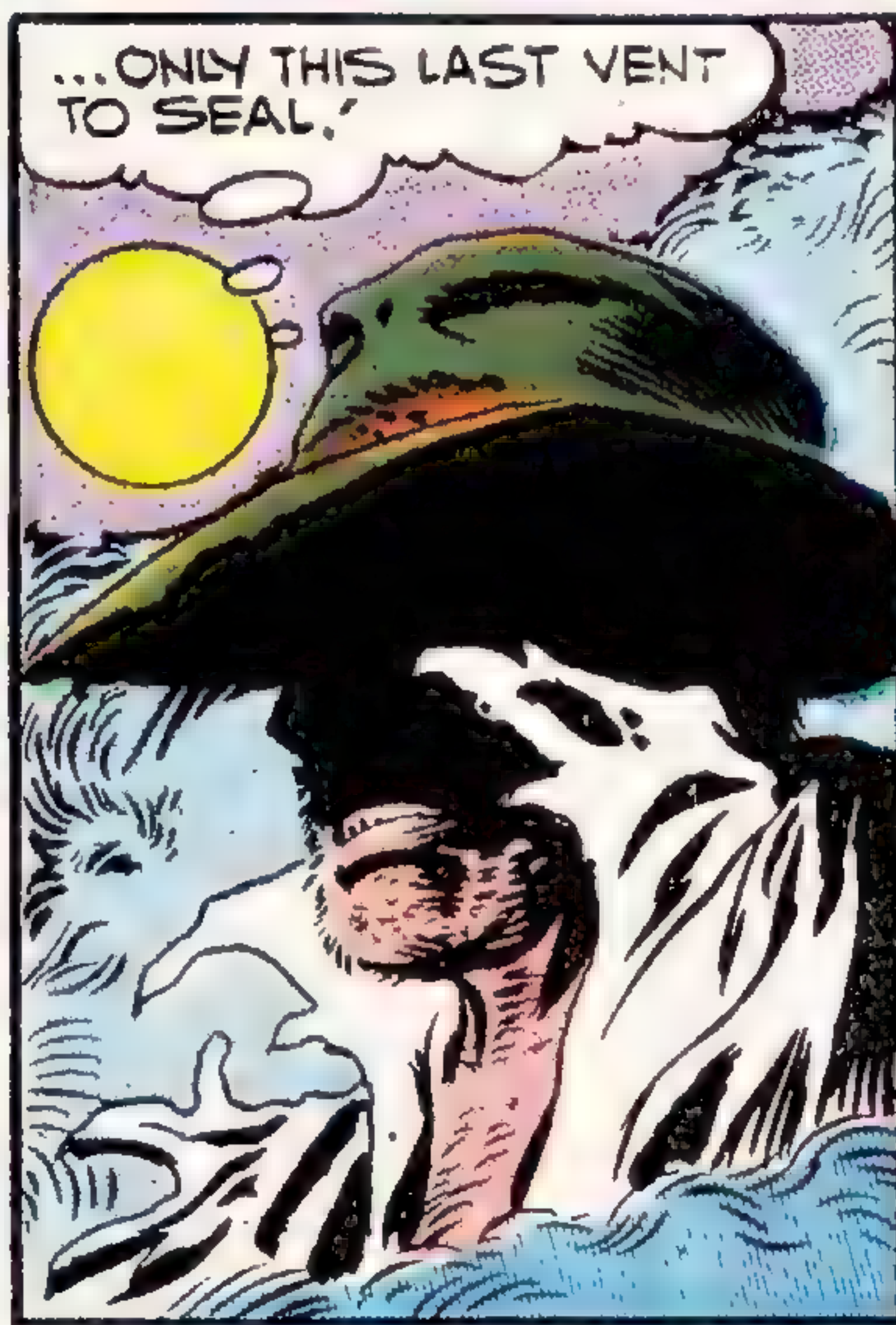
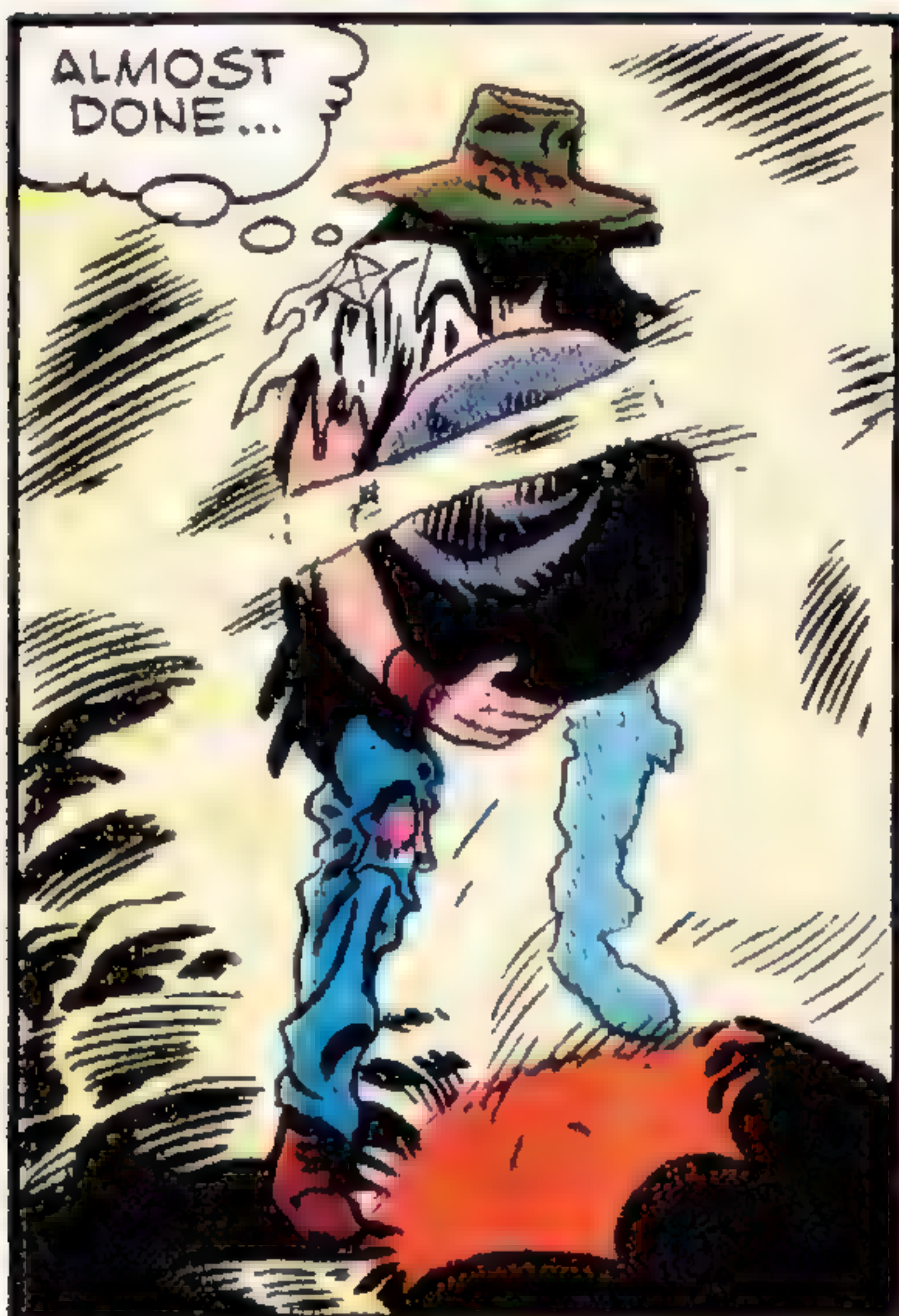
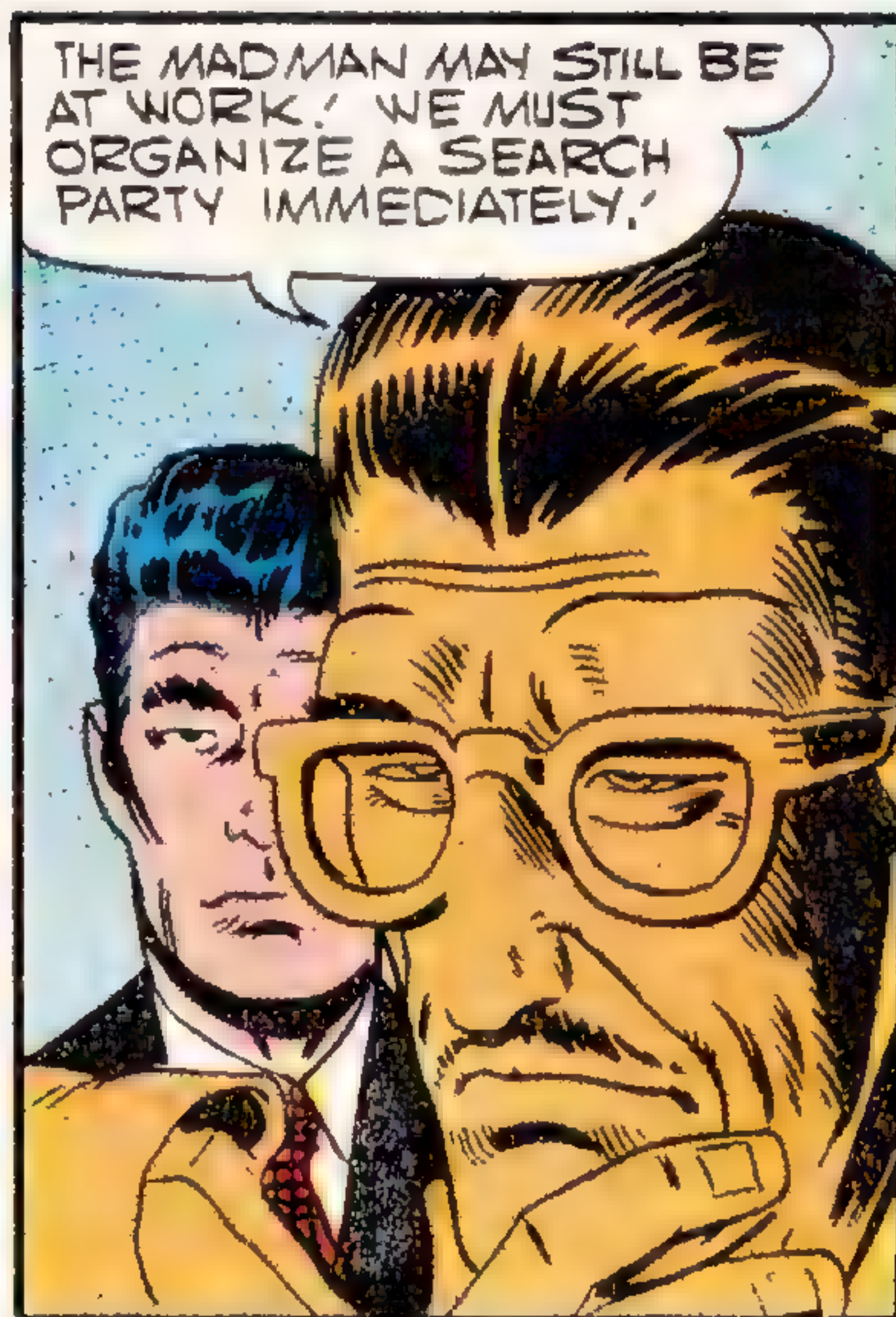
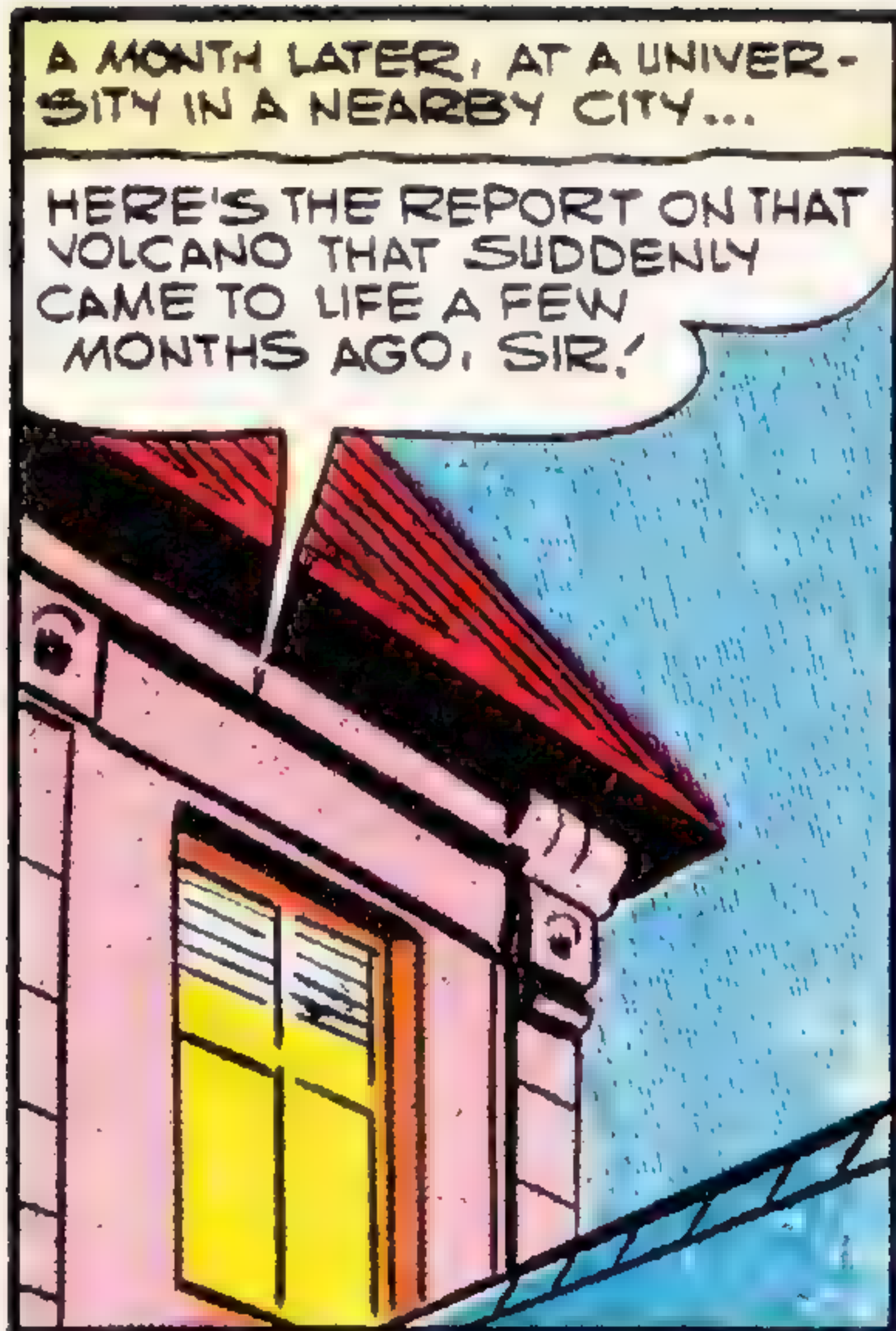
THEN...

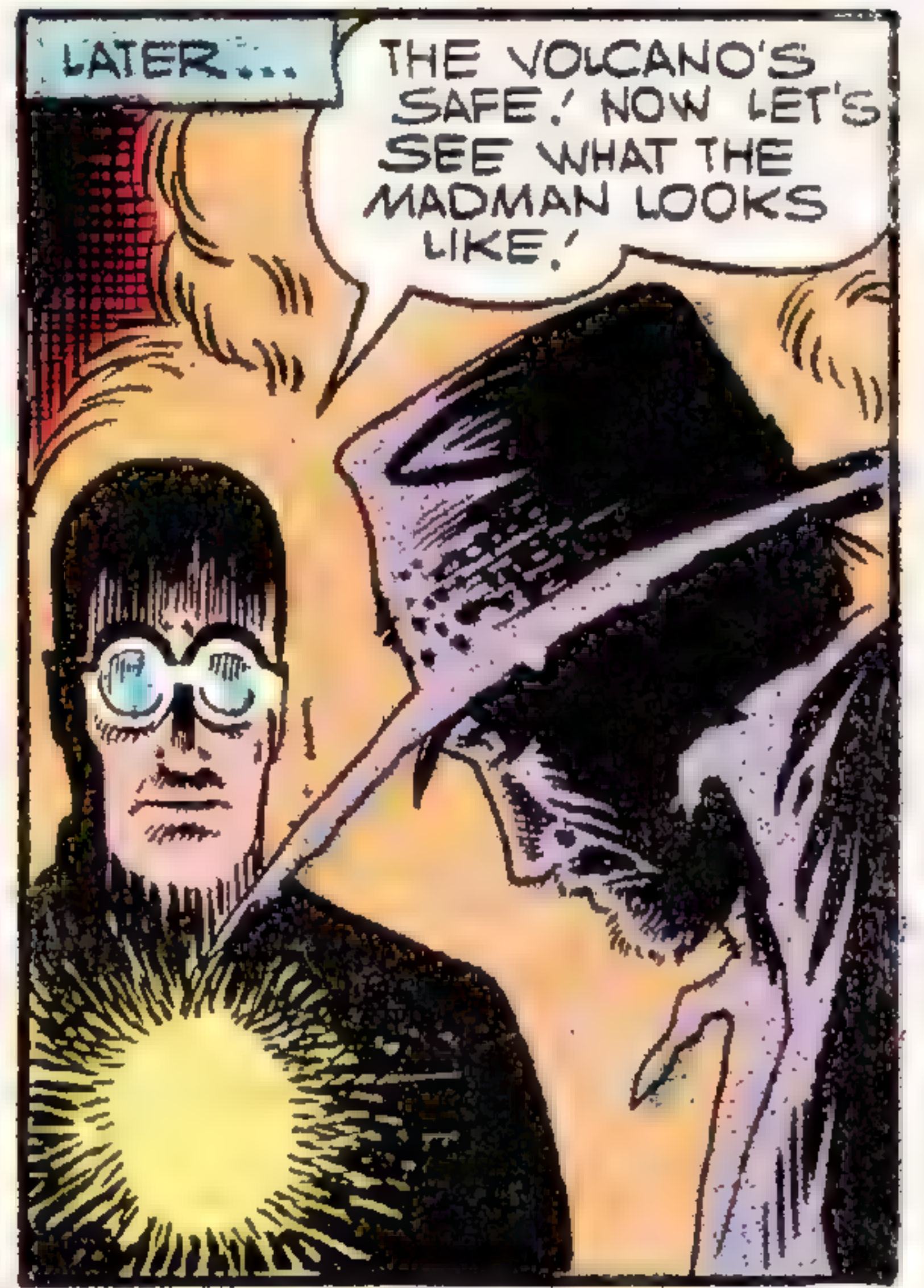
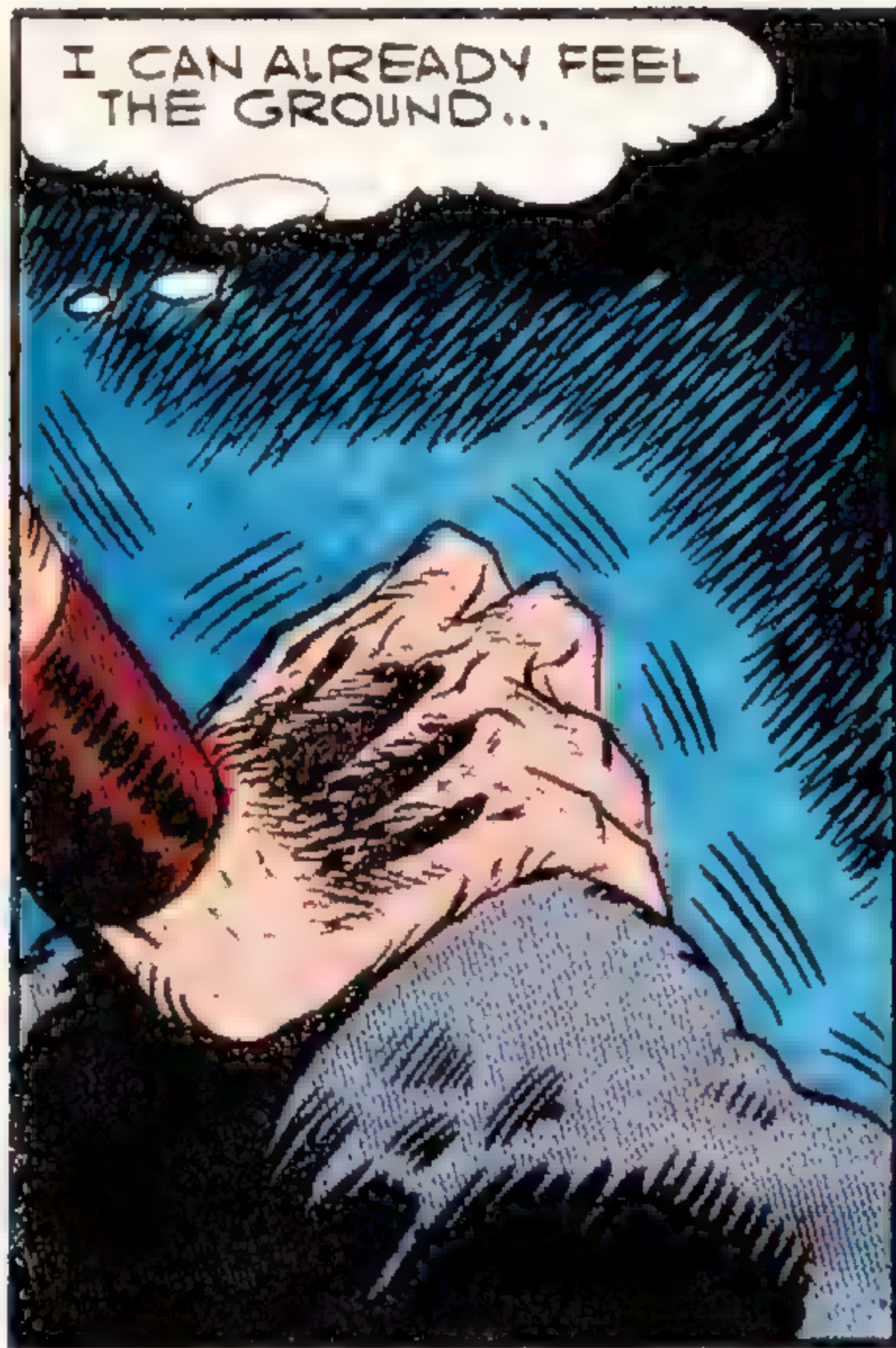


I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW MANY DAYS
I'VE BEEN WORKING ON MY VOLCANO!
CLIMBING NARROW LEDGES...

... SEALING UP ONE SIDE
VENT AFTER ANOTHER...







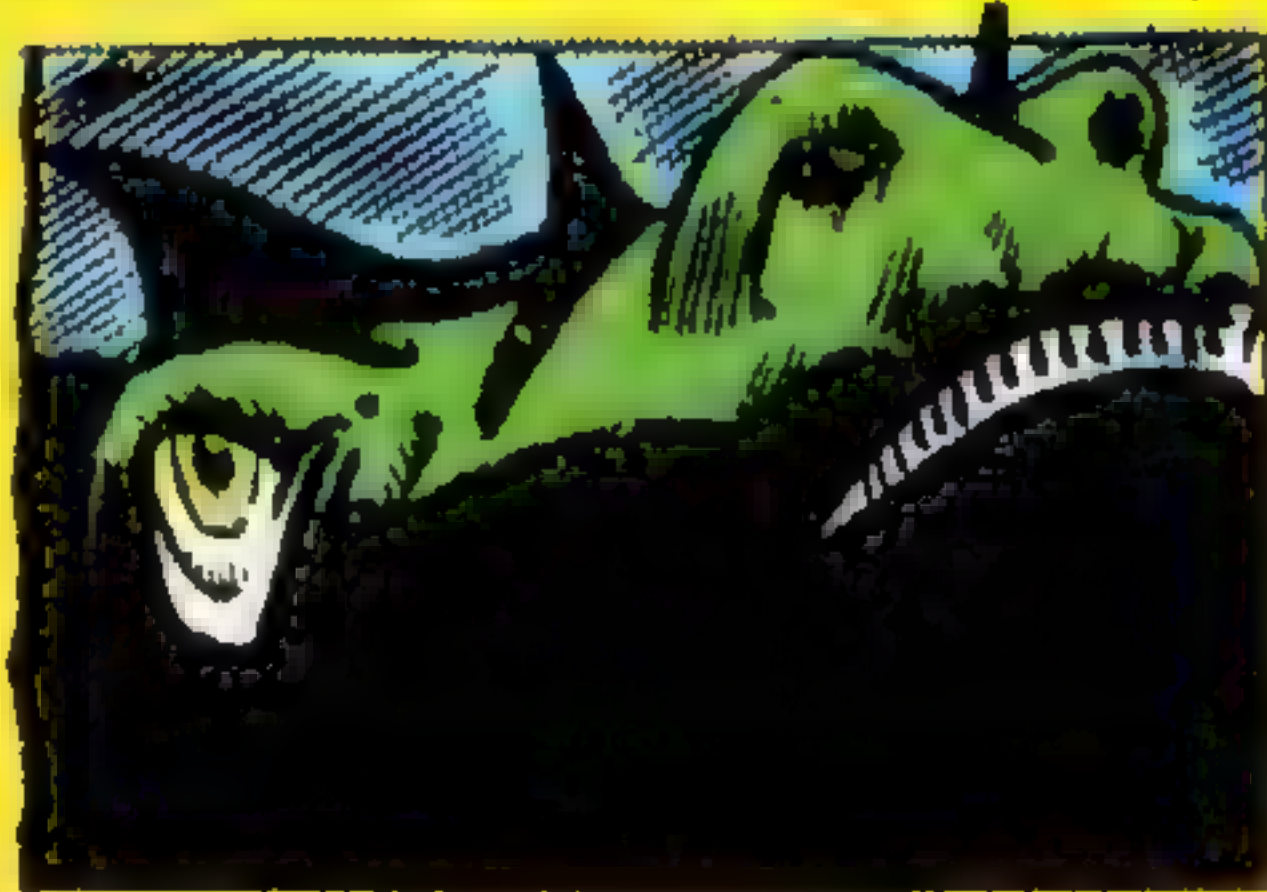
END

The THING

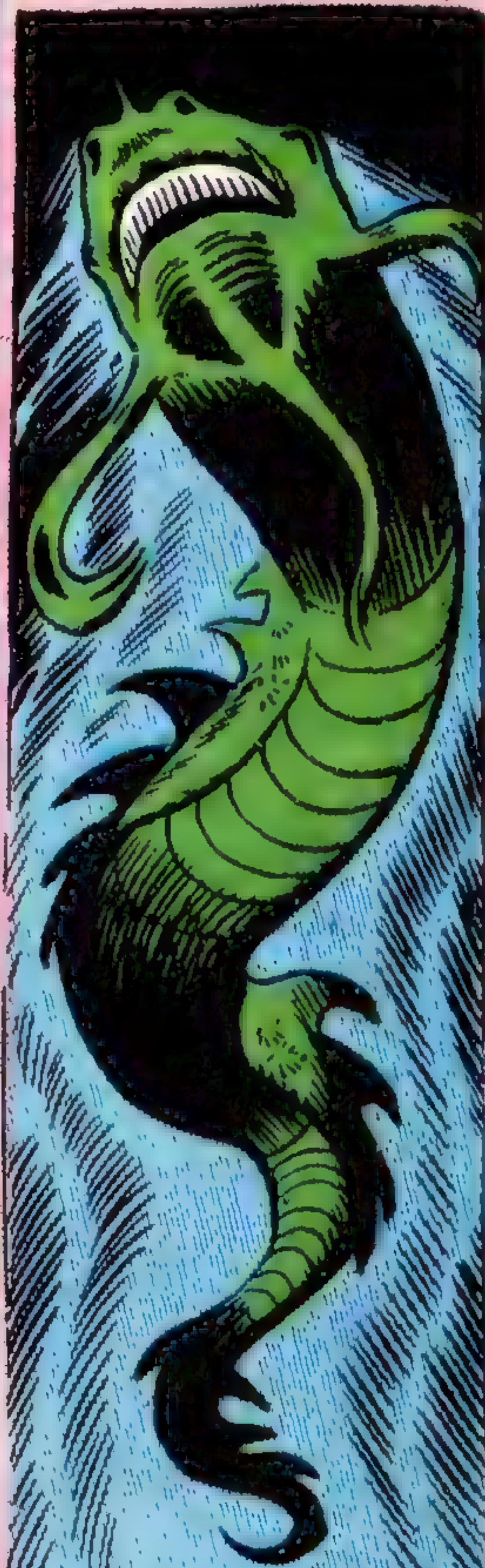
FROM BELOW

AT LAST IT WAS STIRRING! FOR CENTURIES THE THING HAD SLEPT, AN ENORMOUS MOTIONLESS RELIC OF ANCIENT TIMES, THE SOLE SURVIVOR OF A HORRENDOUS SPECIES! BUT AT LAST IT WAS STIRRING...

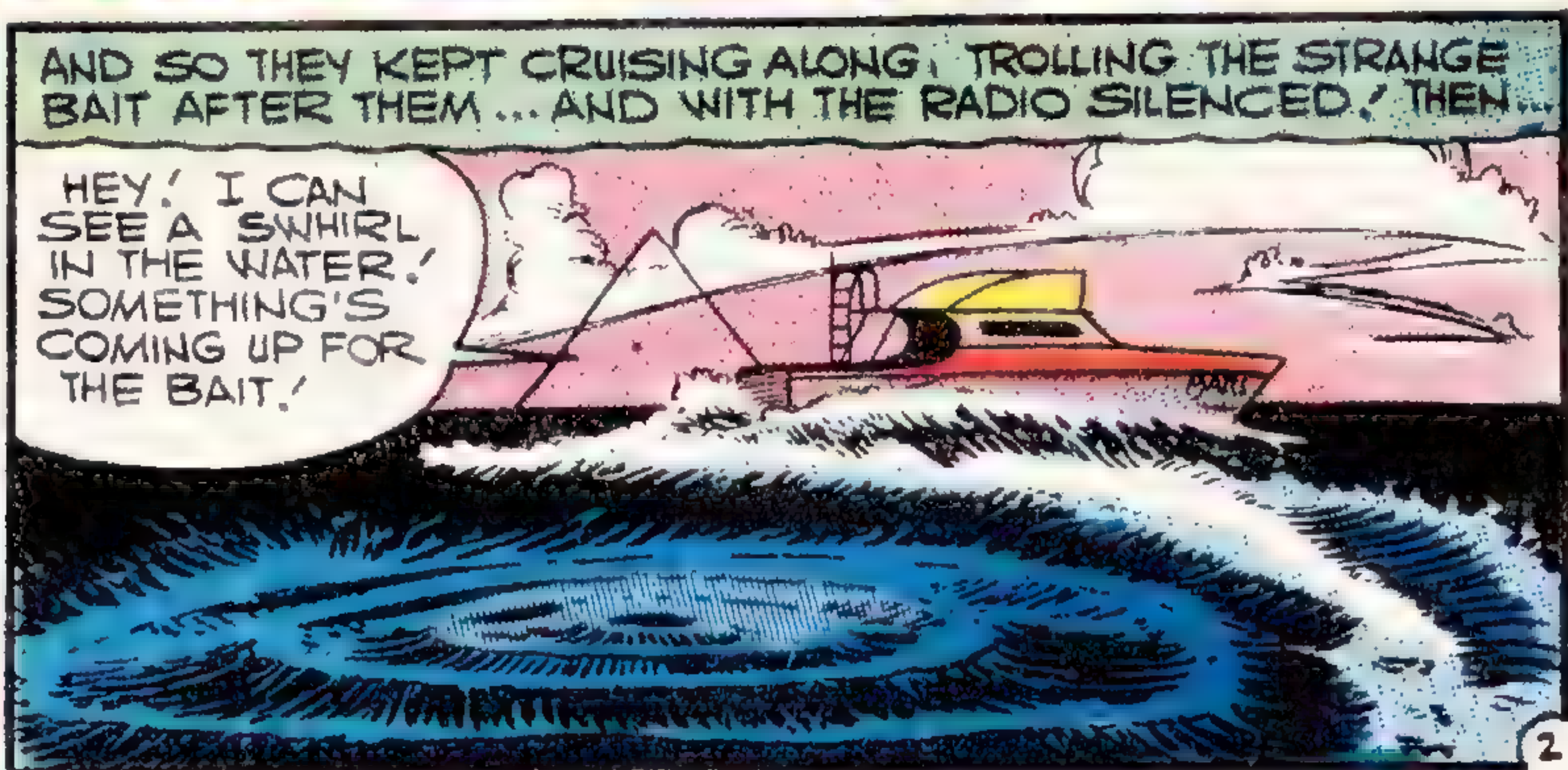
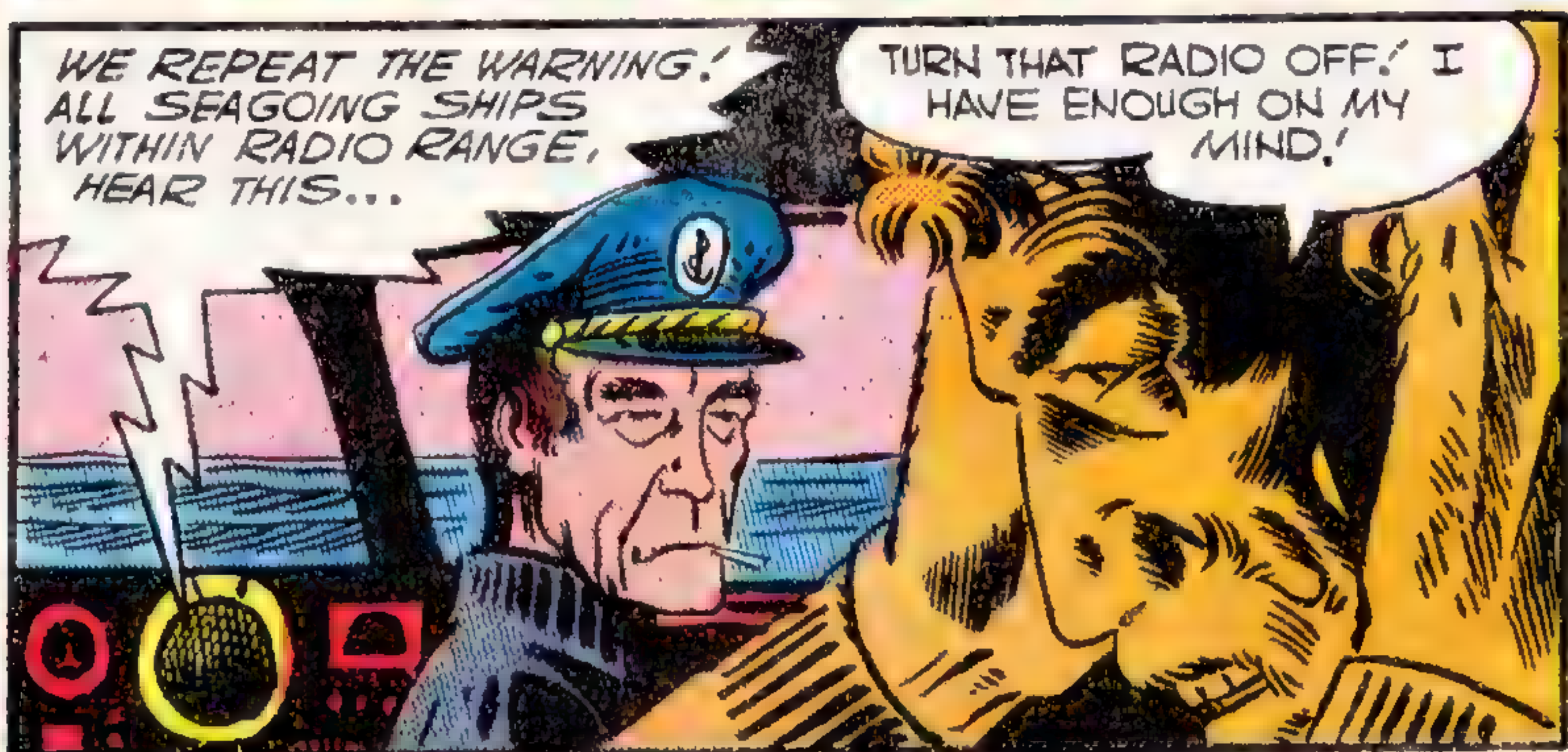
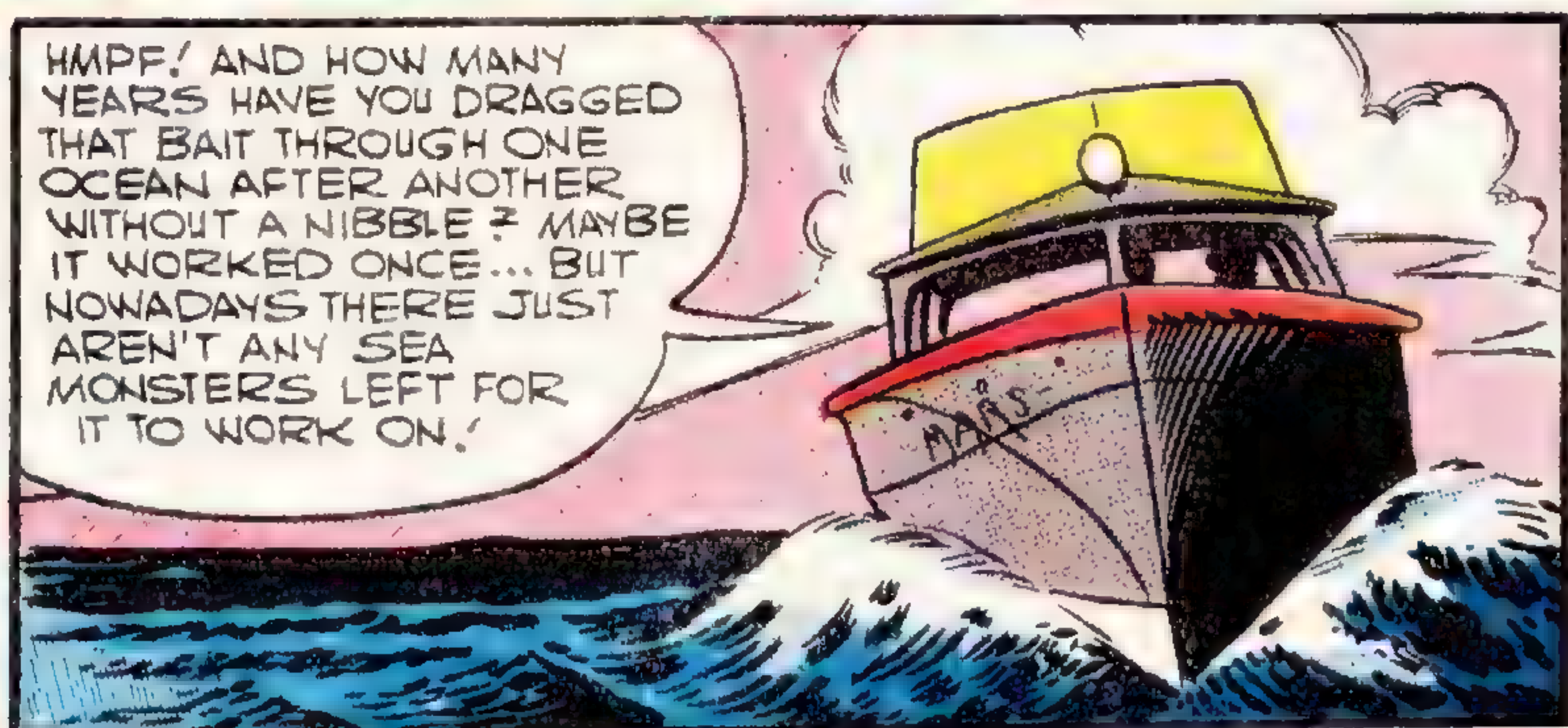
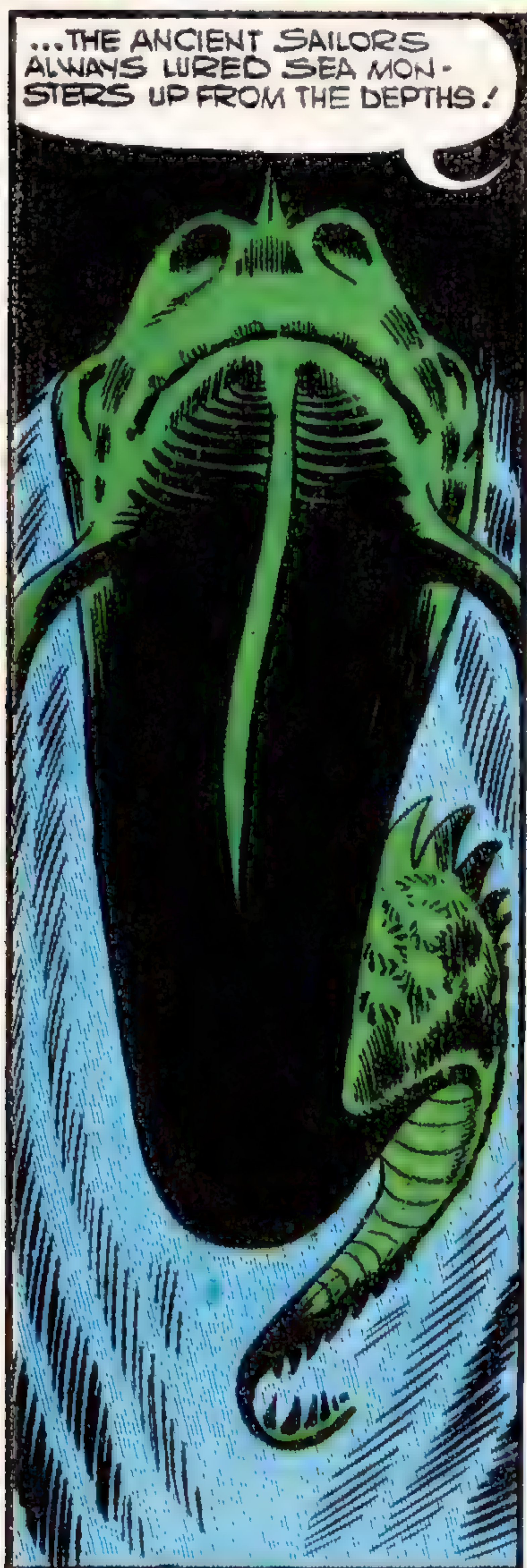
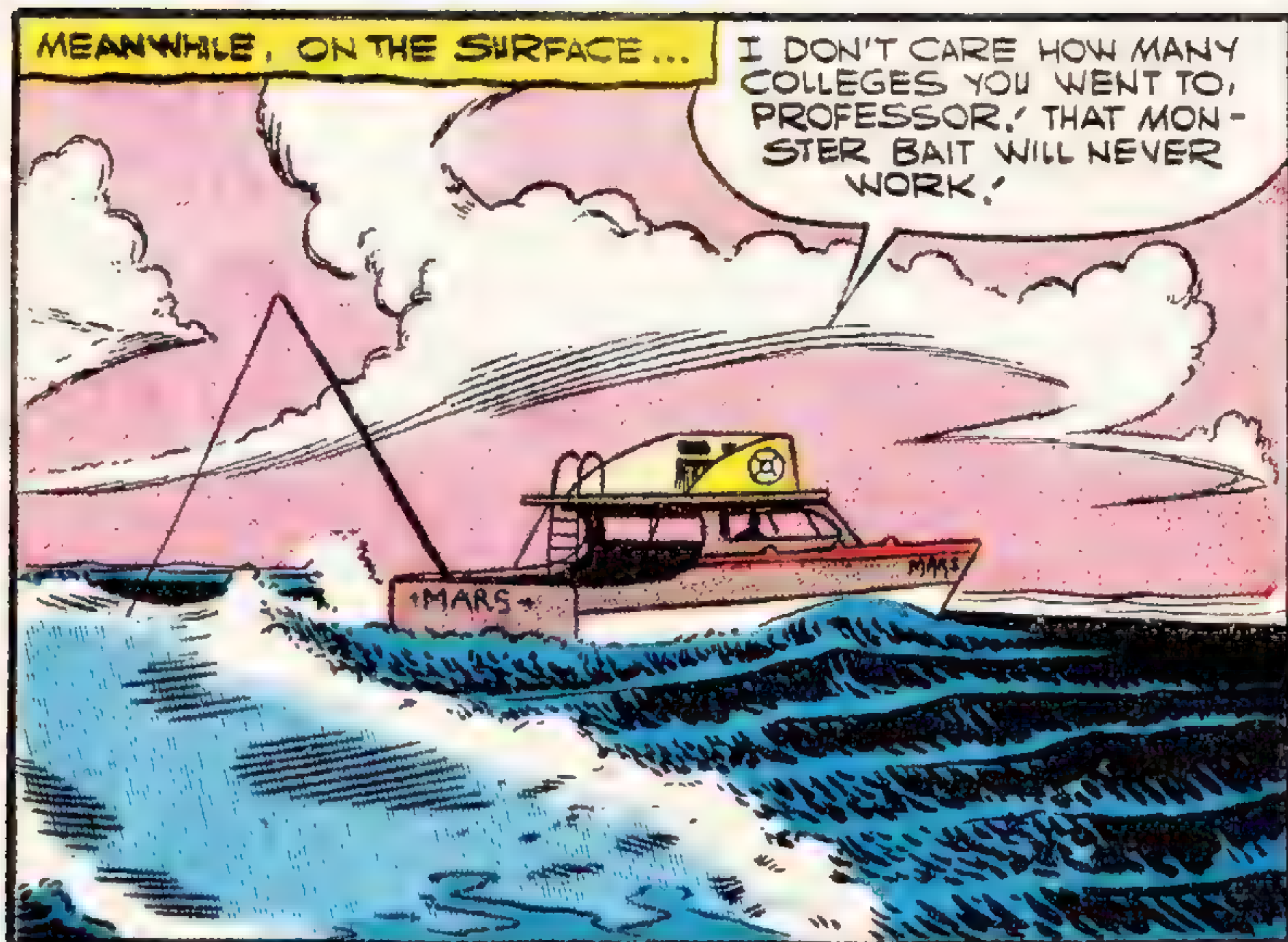
WHAT HAD AWAKENED IT? WHAT WAS NOW CAUSING ITS NOSTRILS TO FLARE IN EAGER FRENZY AS IT KEPT SINUOUSLY RISING THROUGH THE MURKY WATER...

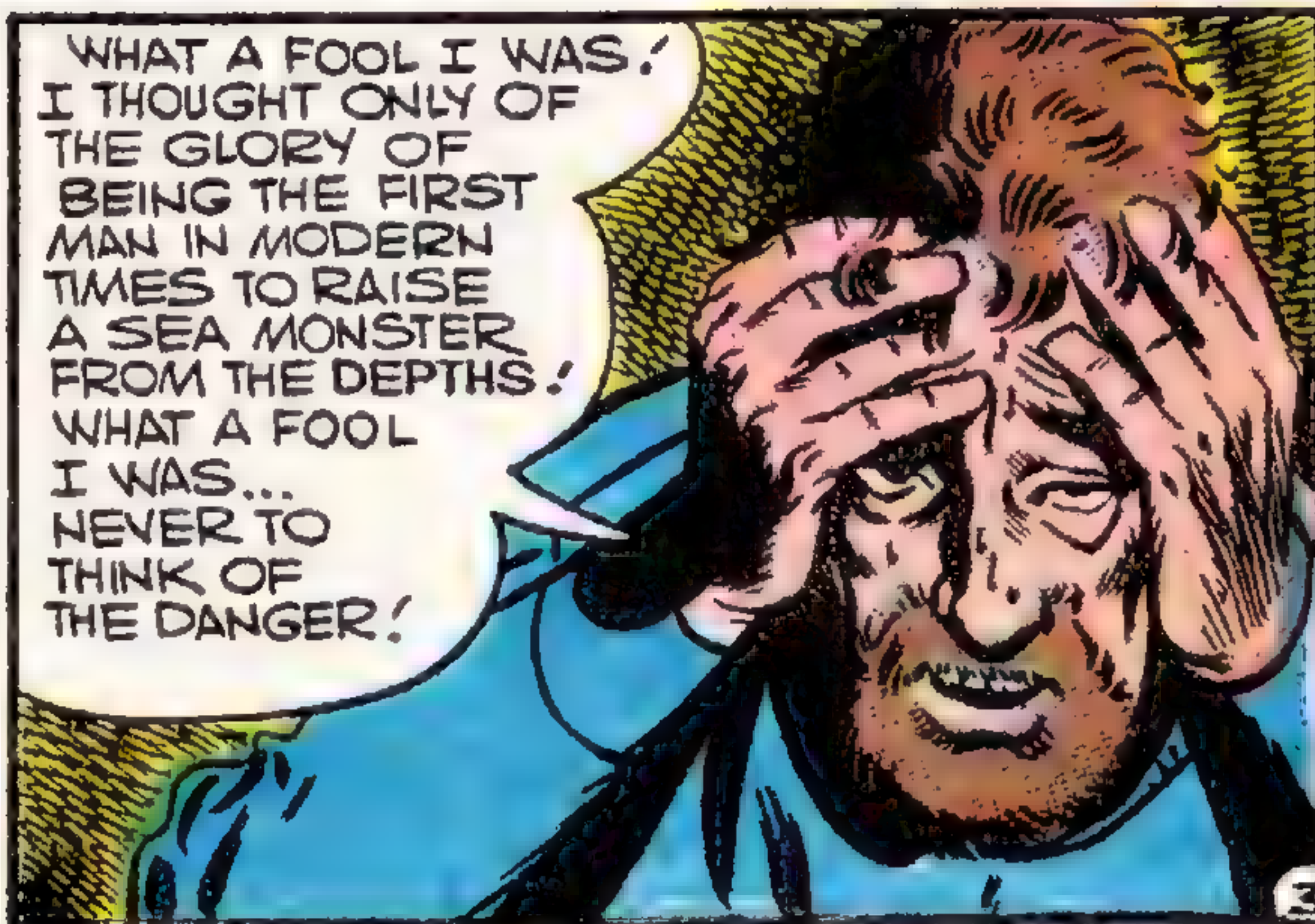
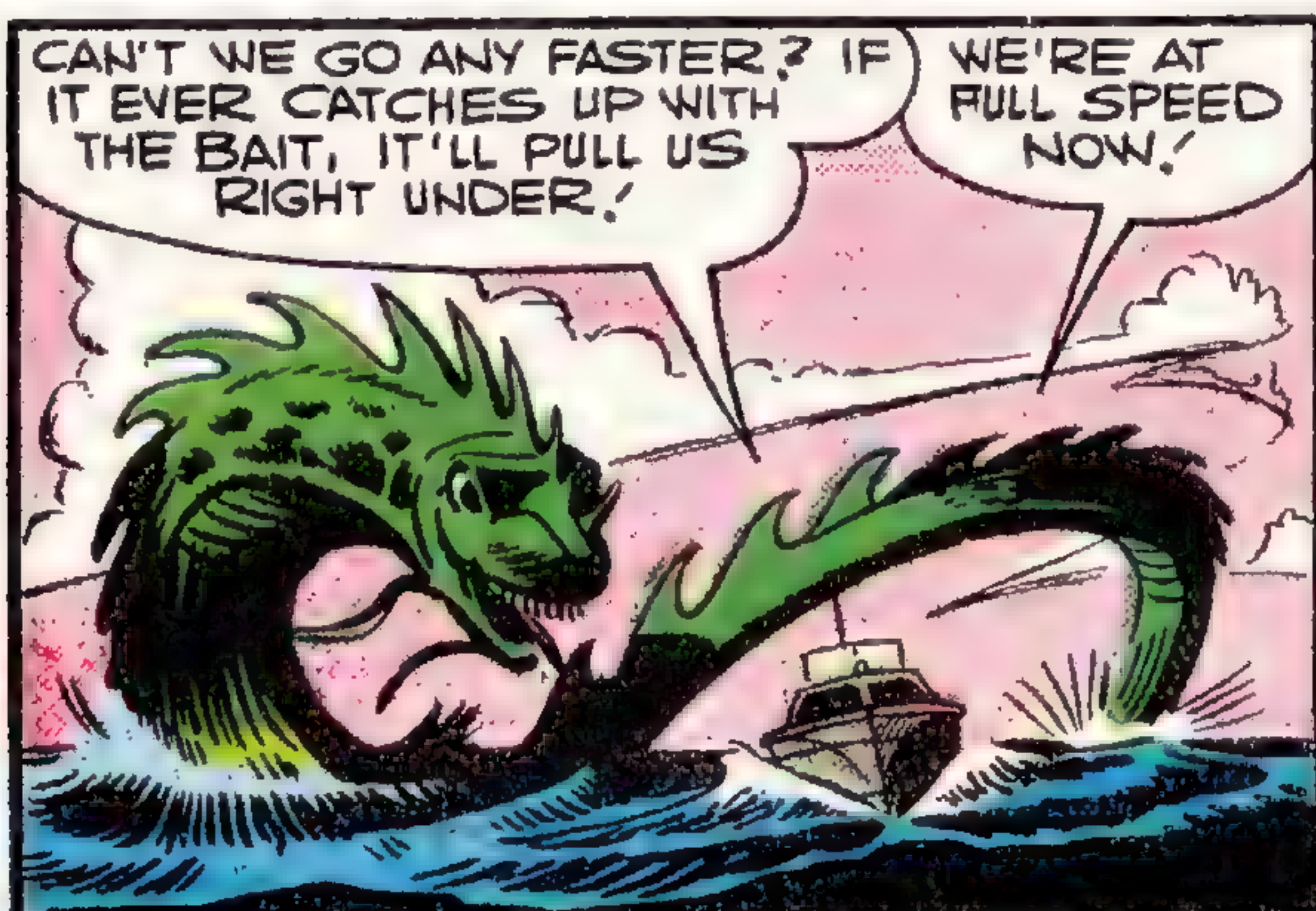
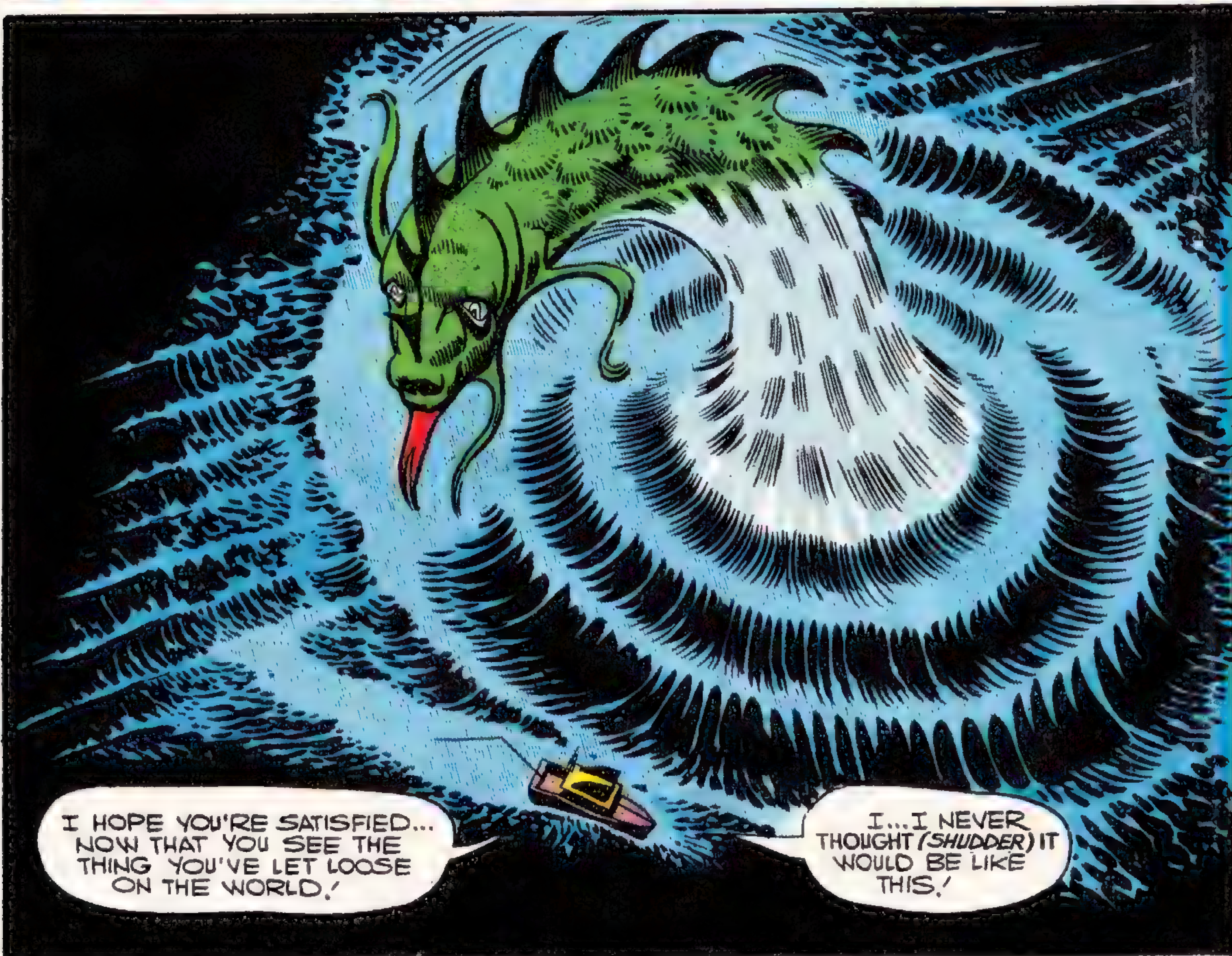
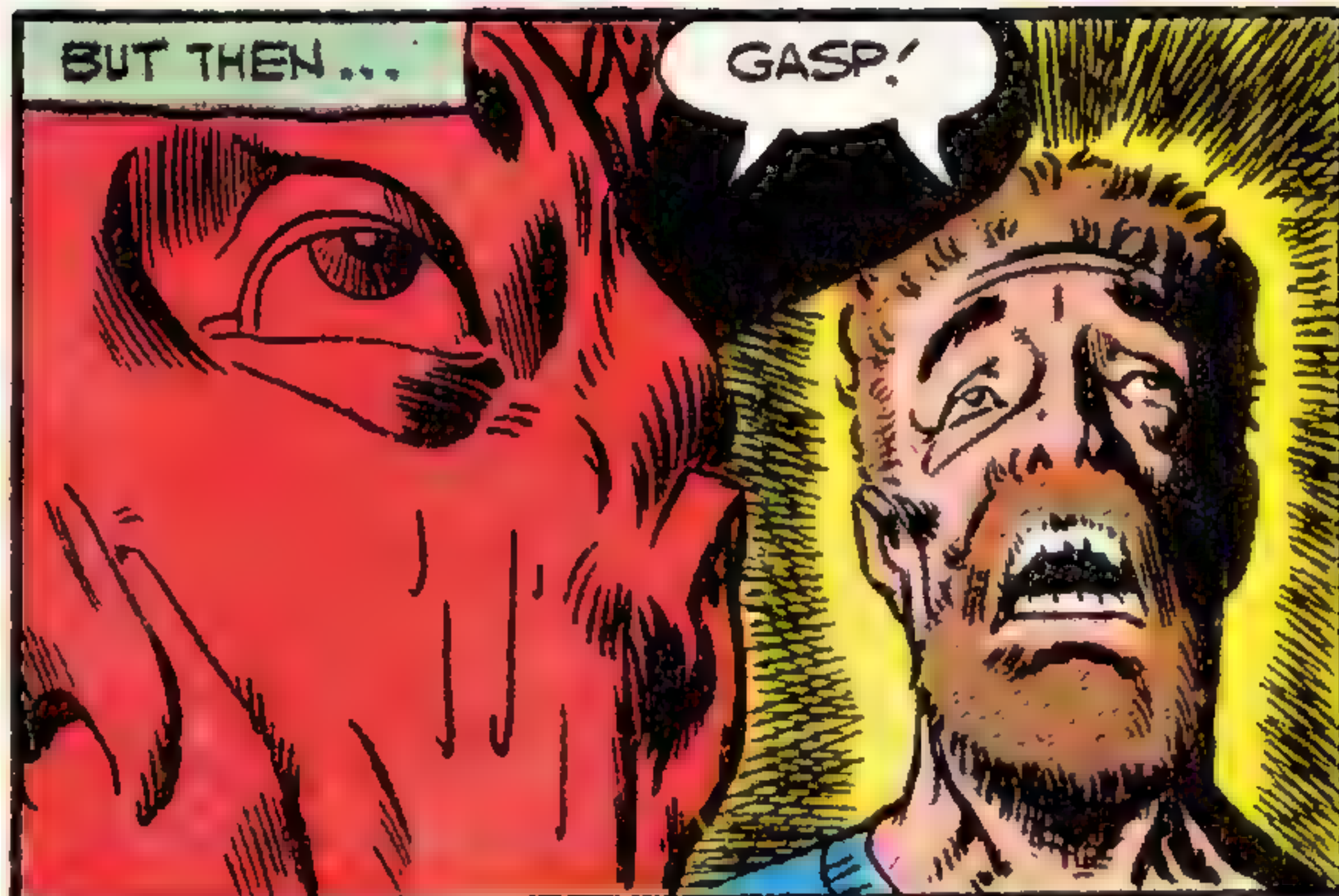
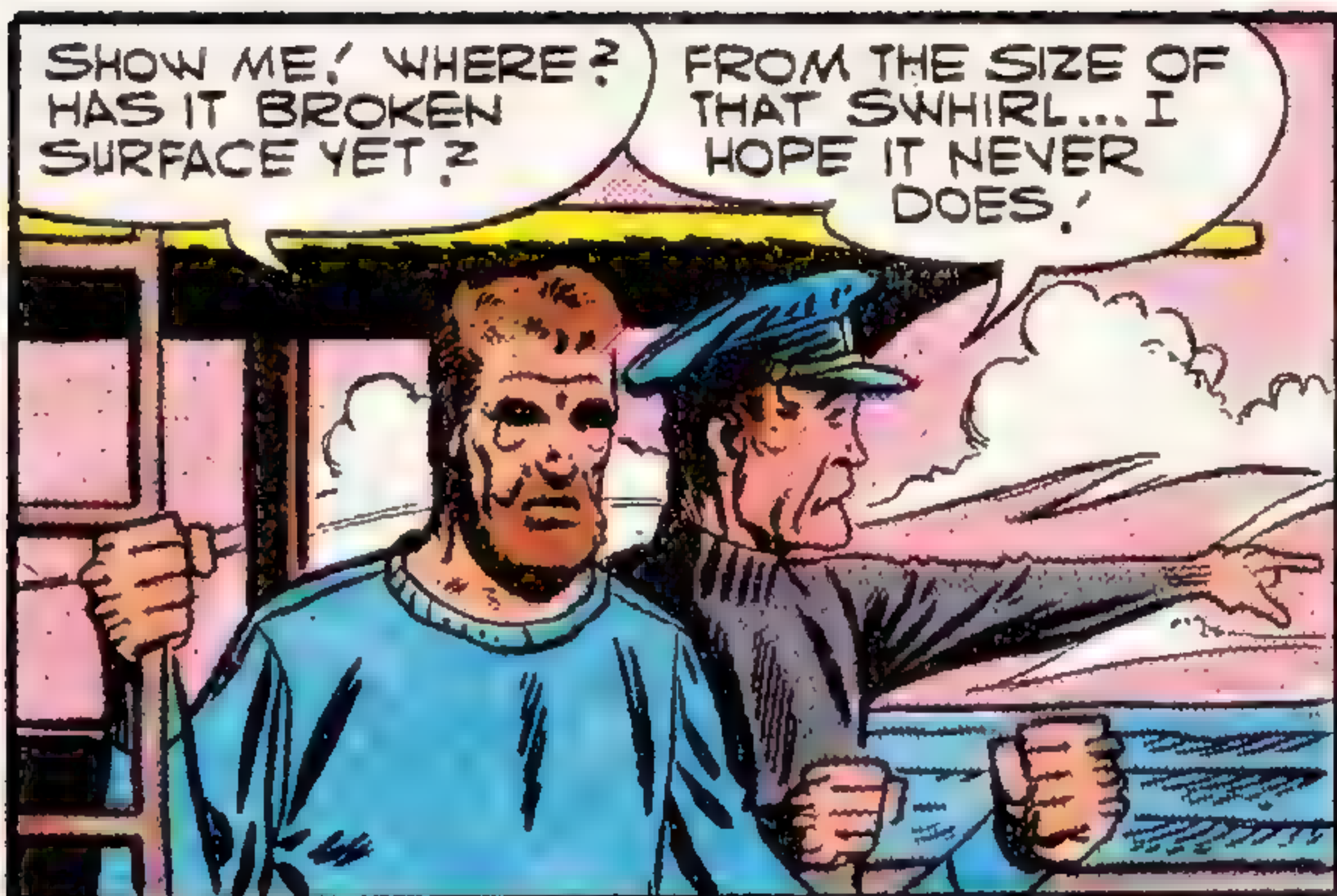


...CLOSER AND CLOSER TO THE OCEAN'S SURFACE...



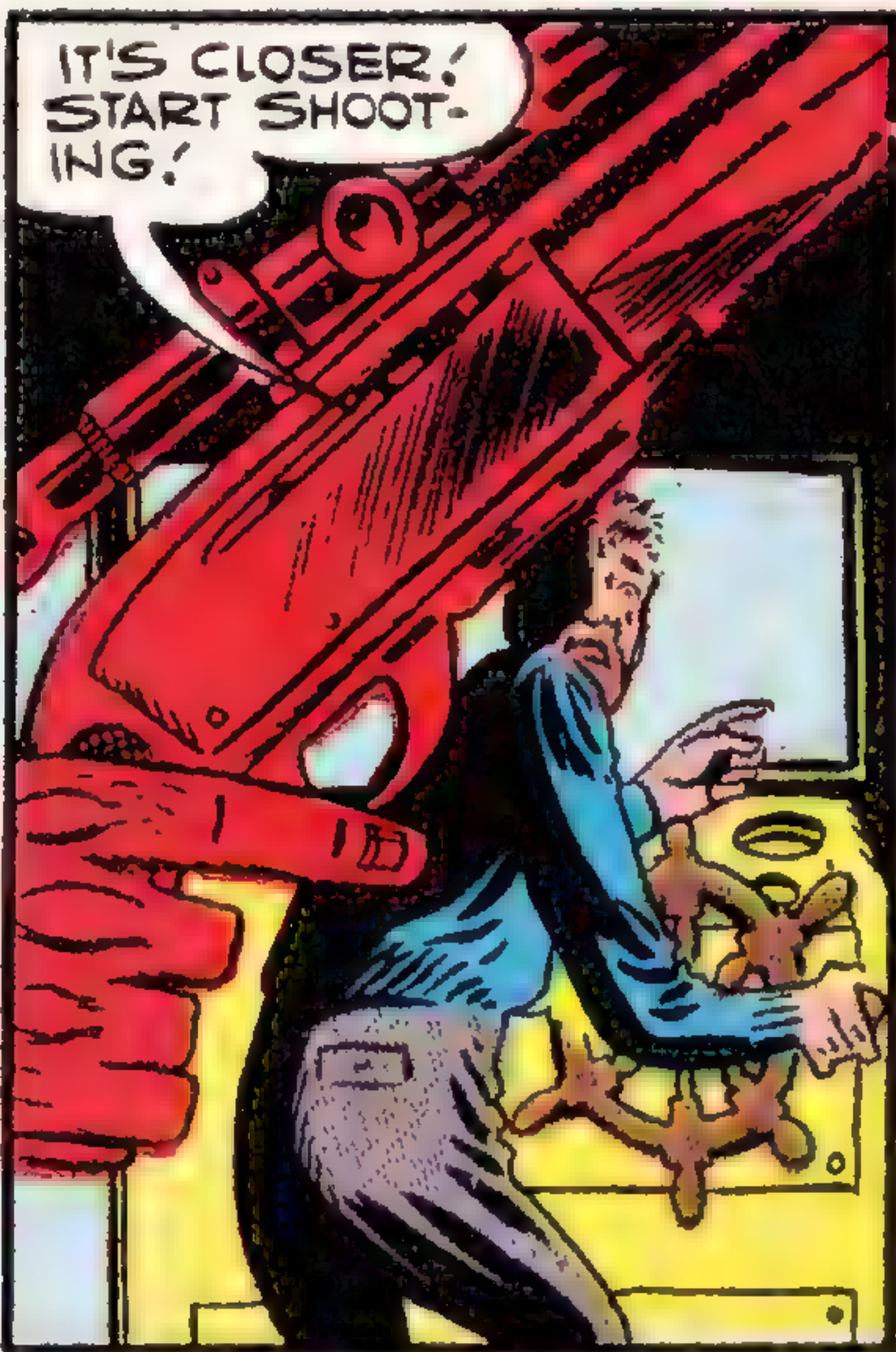
S. Ditko



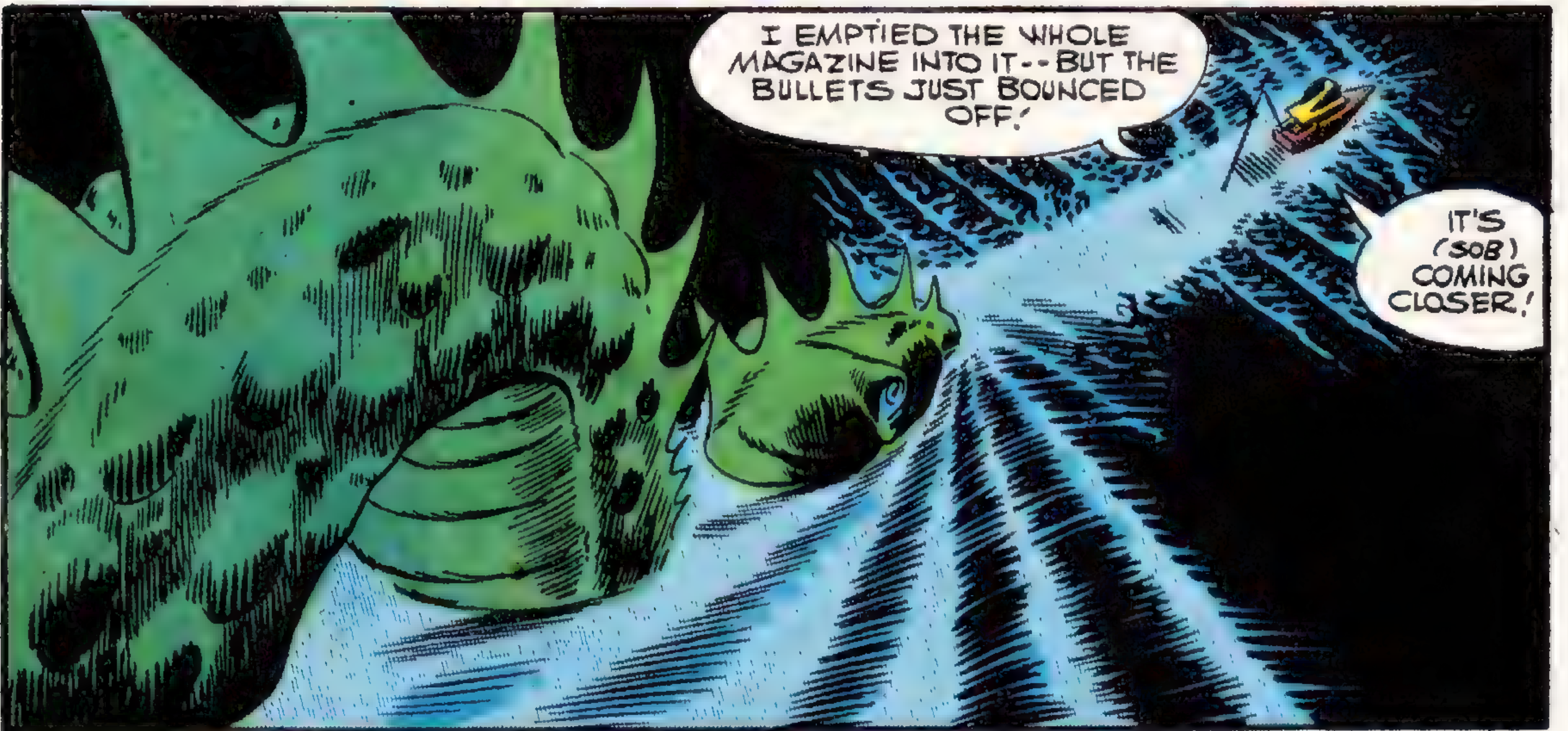




KEEP A STRAIGHT COURSE, I'VE GOT A HIGH-POWERED RIFLE ABOARD!



IT'S CLOSER! START SHOOTING!



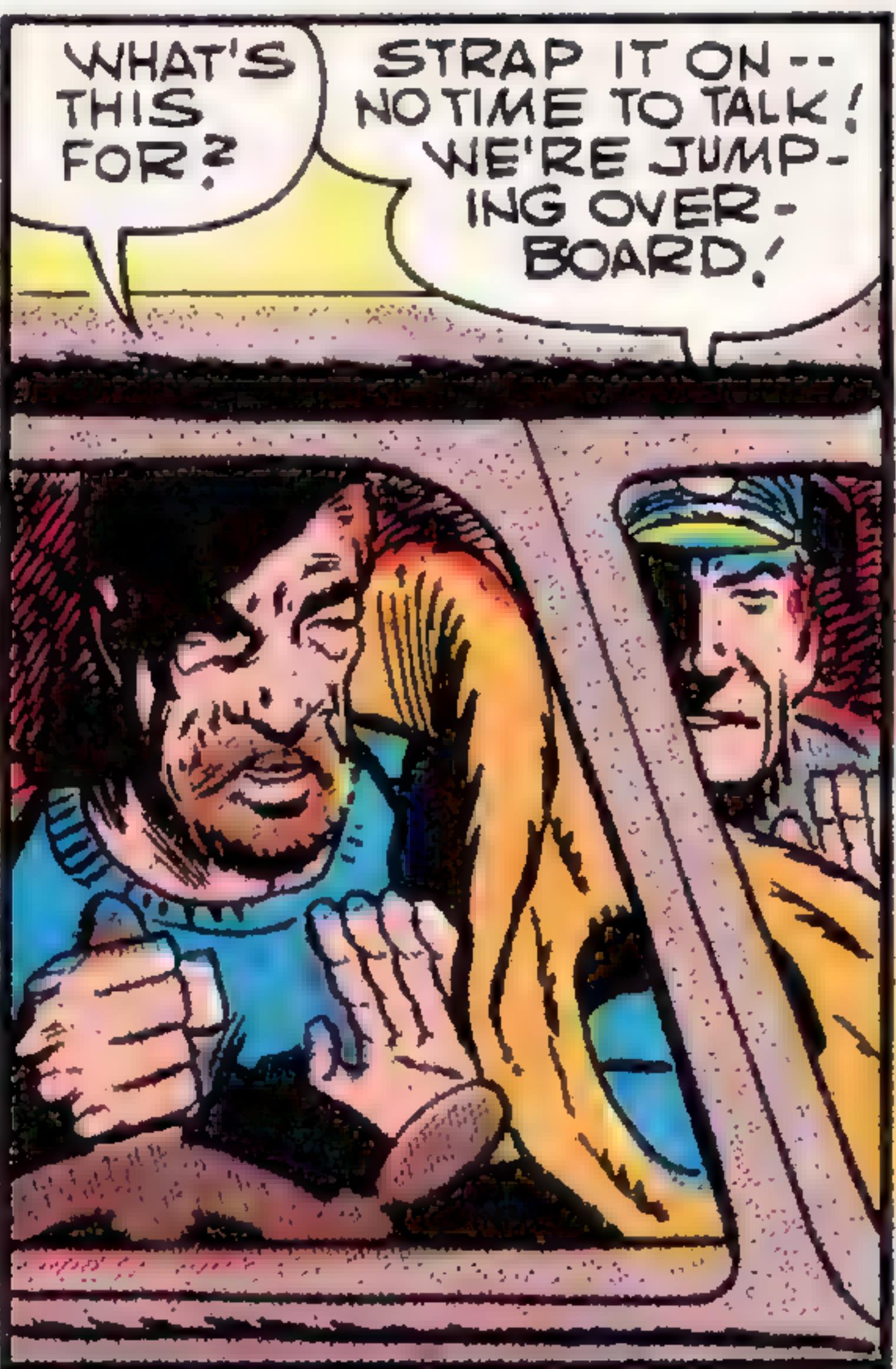
I EMPTIED THE WHOLE MAGAZINE INTO IT-- BUT THE BULLETS JUST BOUNCED OFF!

IT'S (SOB) COMING CLOSER!



I DESERVE WHATEVER WILL HAPPEN BECAUSE I WAS SUCH A FOOL! BUT WHAT DID YOU AND THE REST OF THE WORLD DO--TO DESERVE THIS?

HMMM!



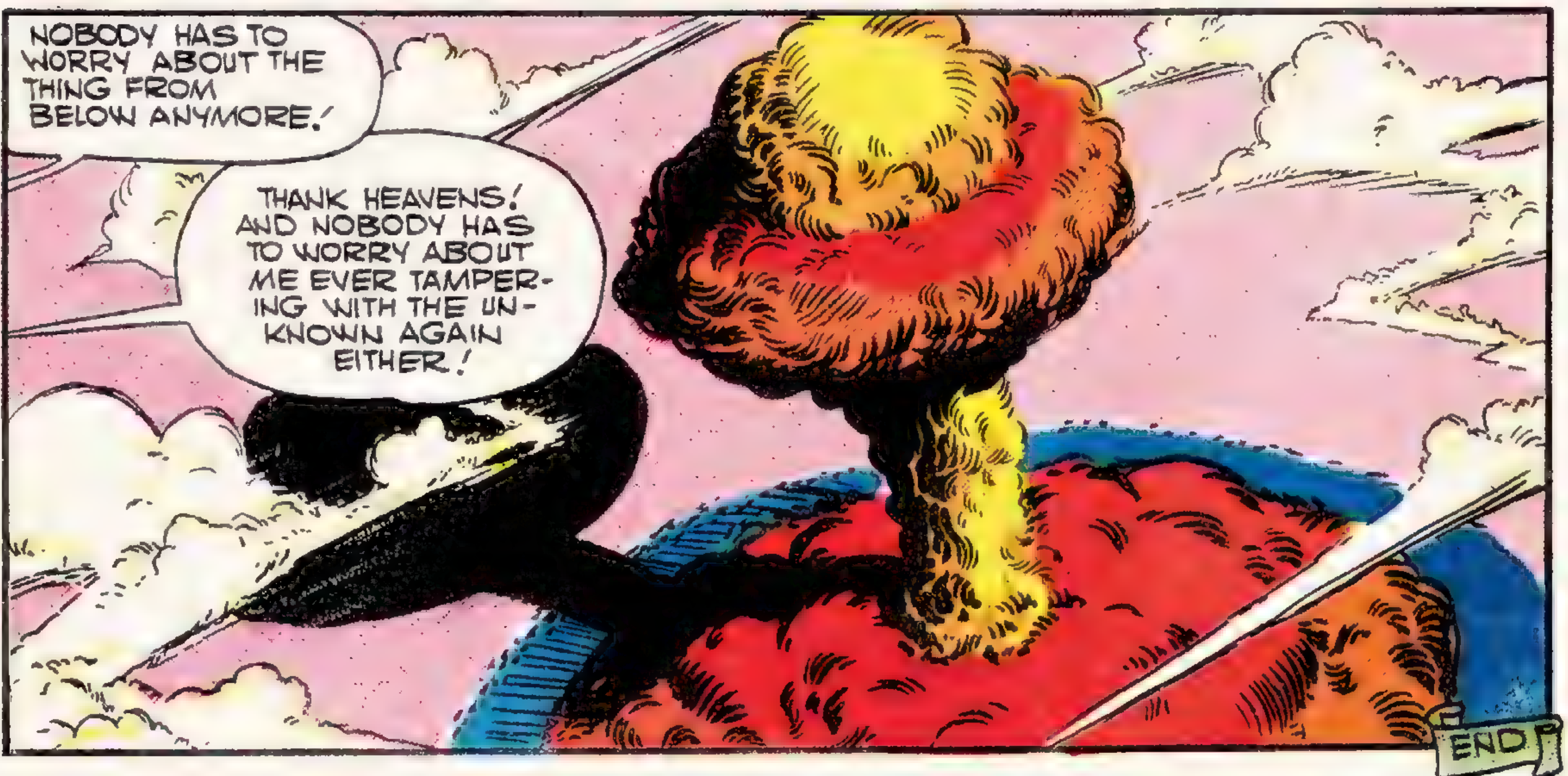
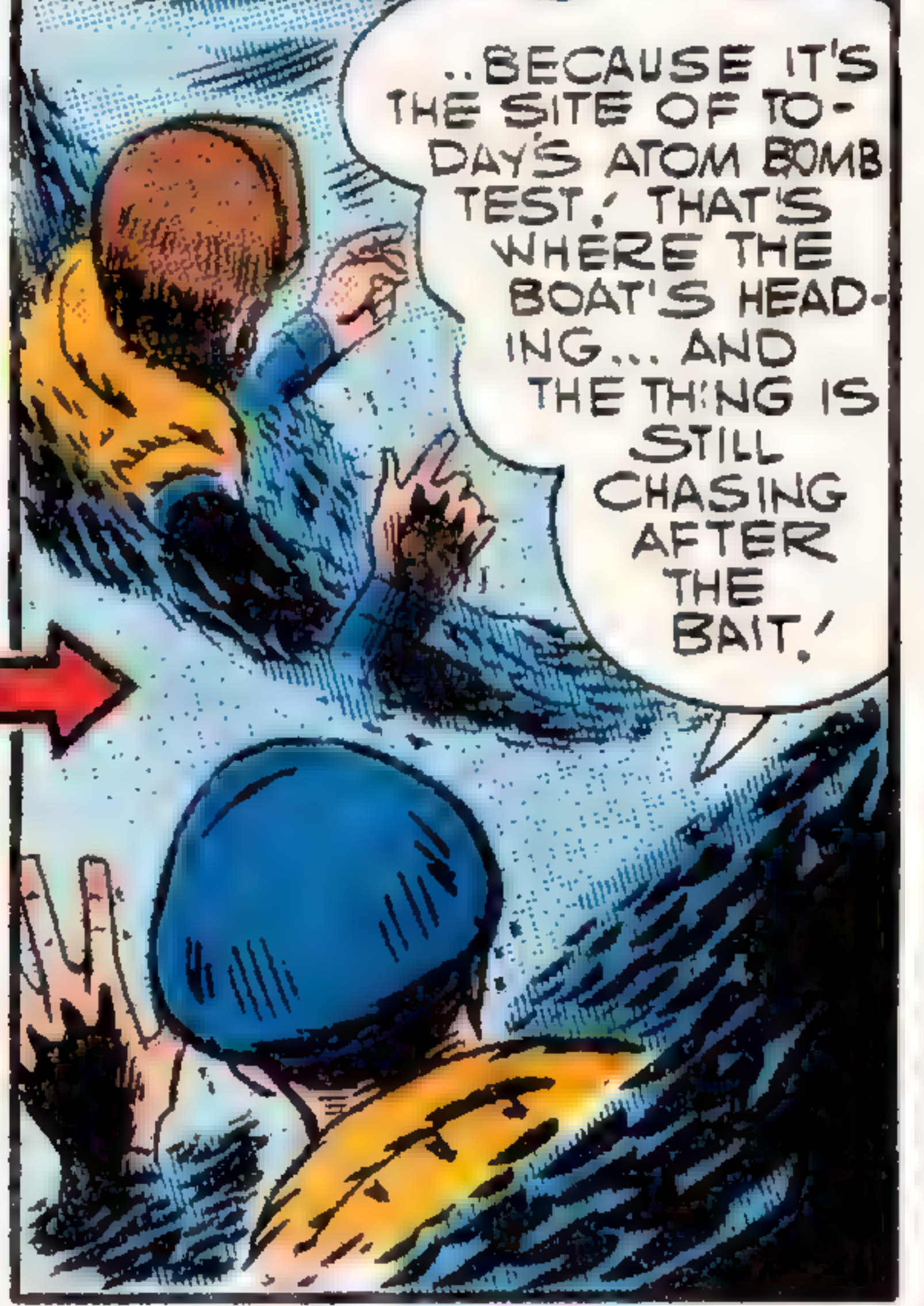
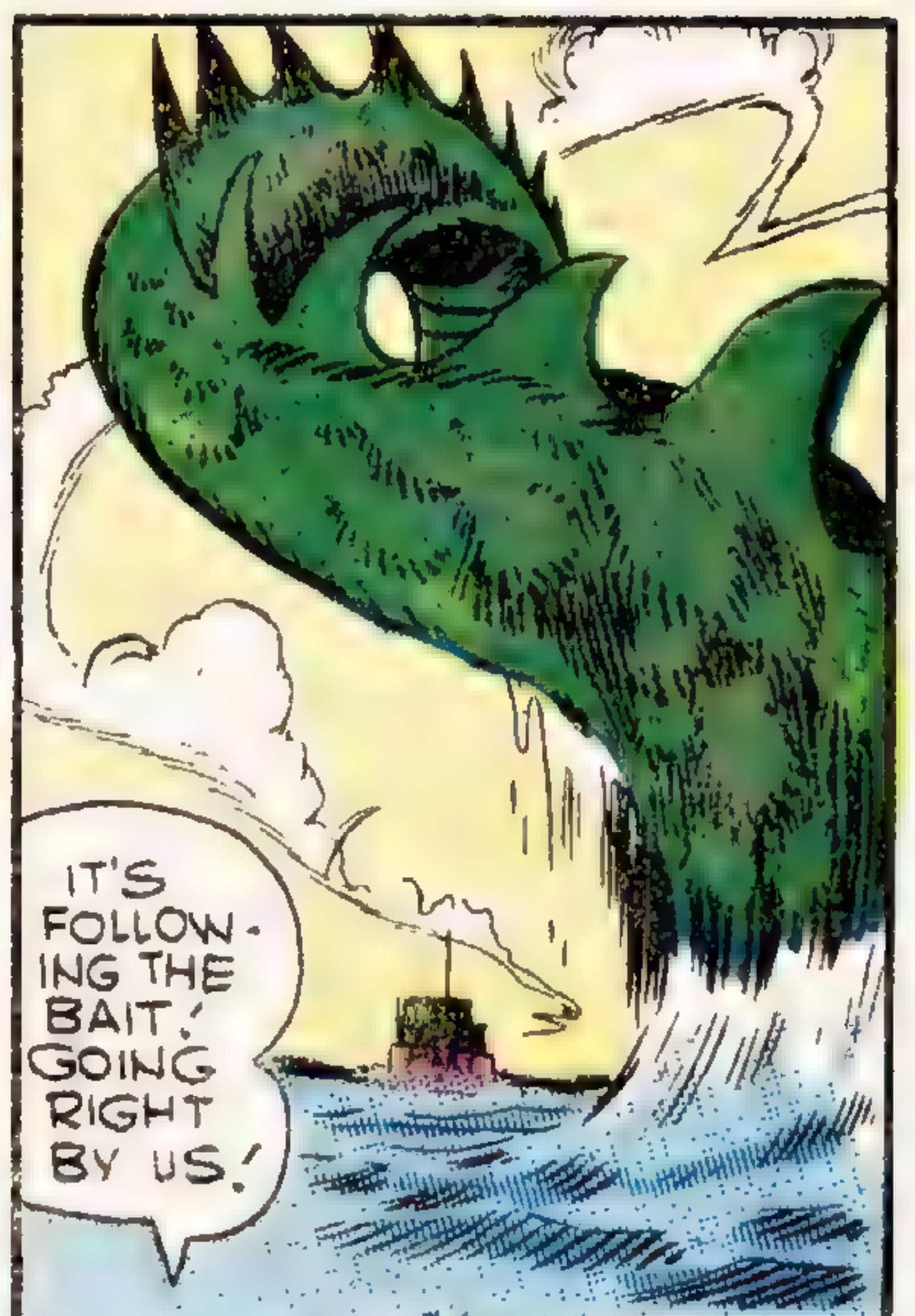
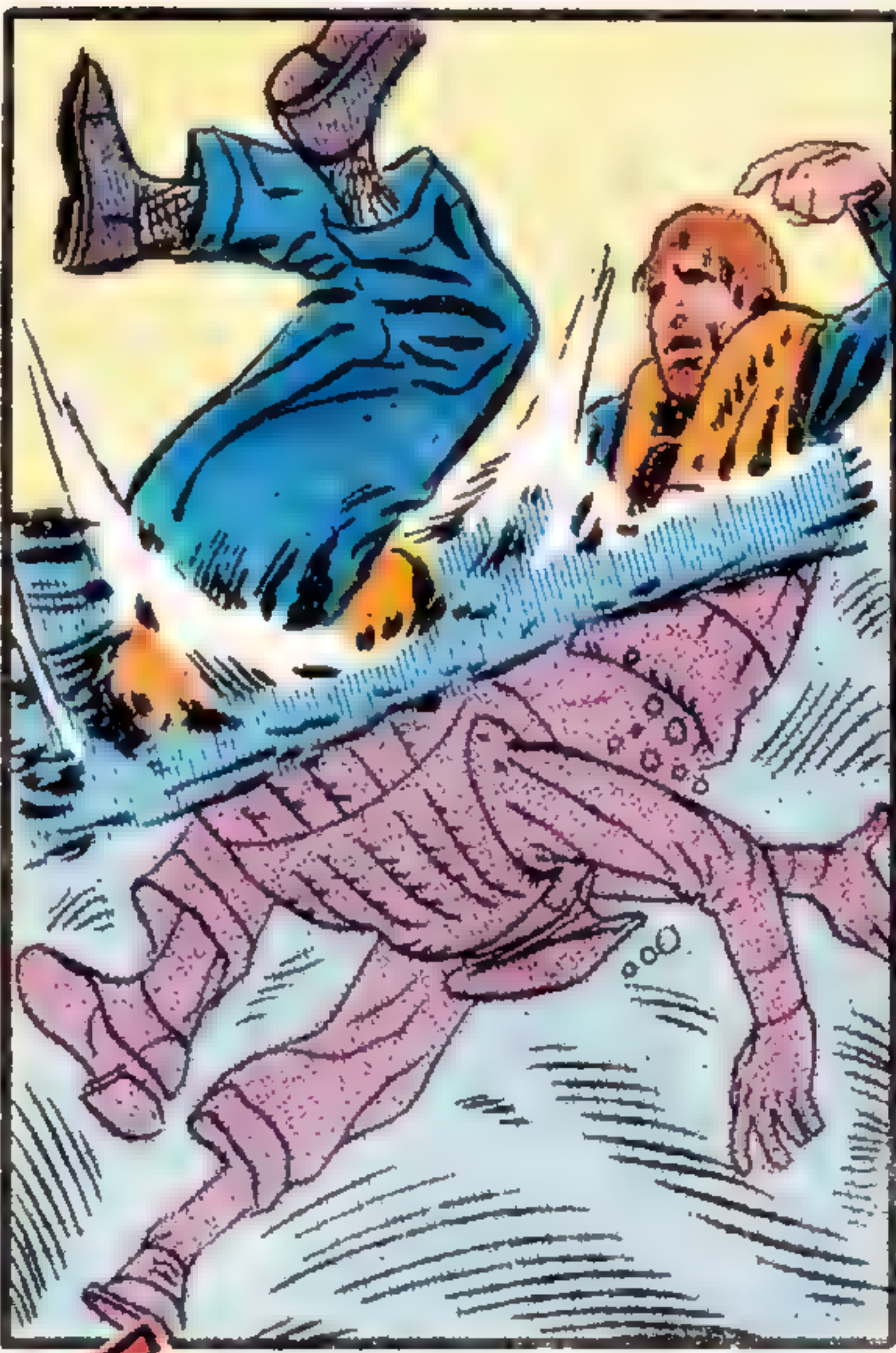
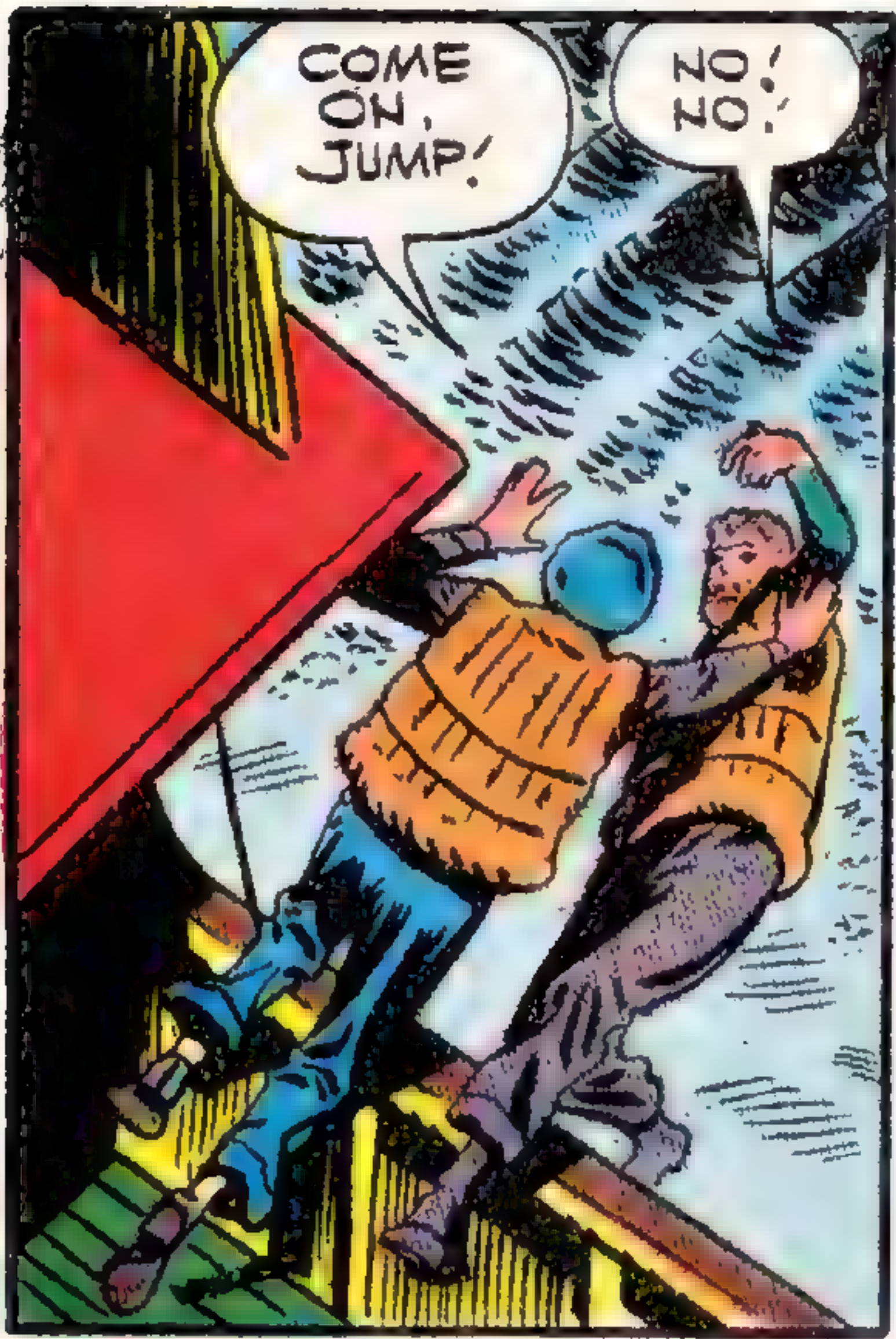
WHAT'S THIS FOR?

STRAP IT ON-- NO TIME TO TALK! WE'RE JUMPING OVERBOARD!

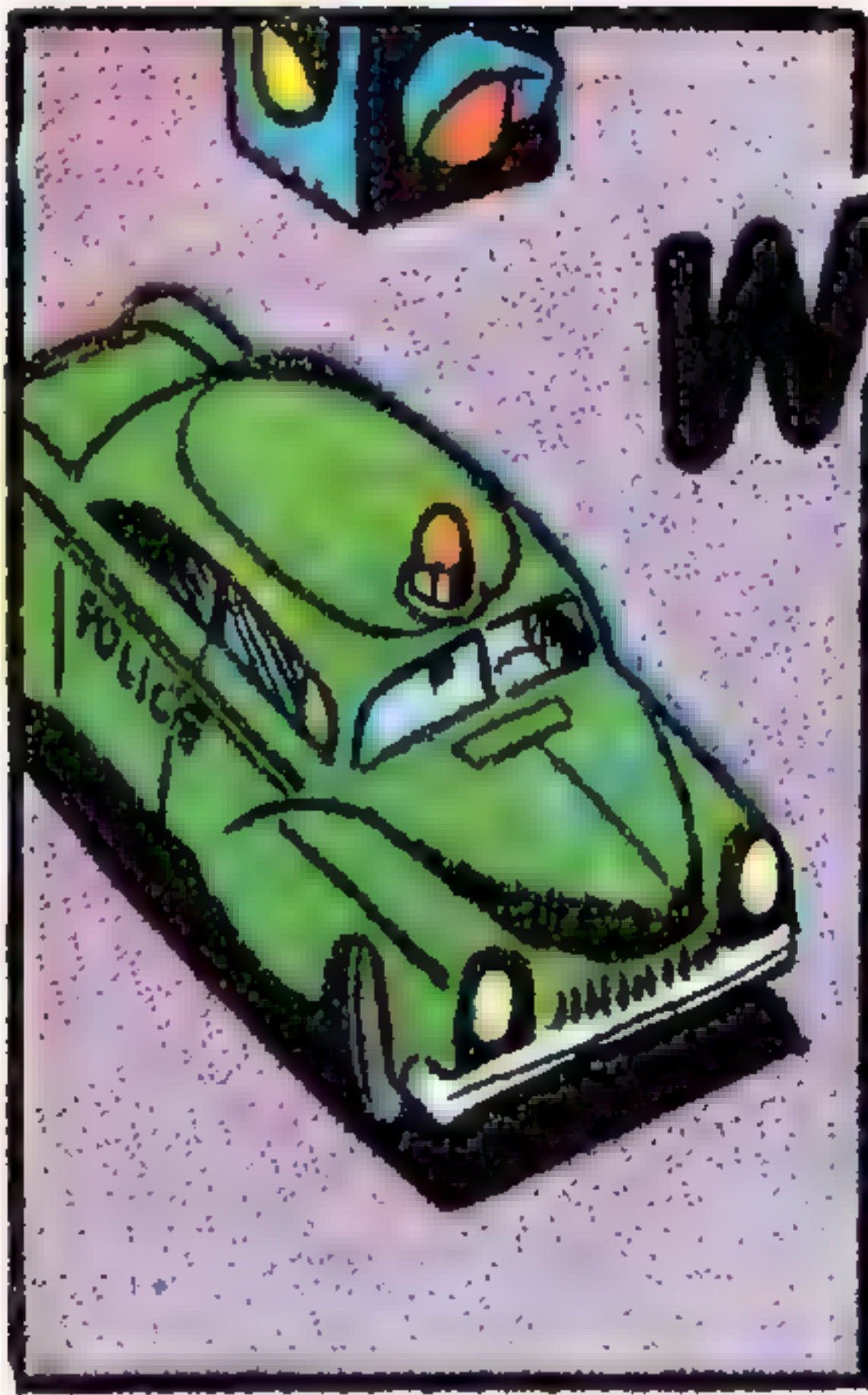


OVERBOARD? IN THE WATER... WITH THE THING?

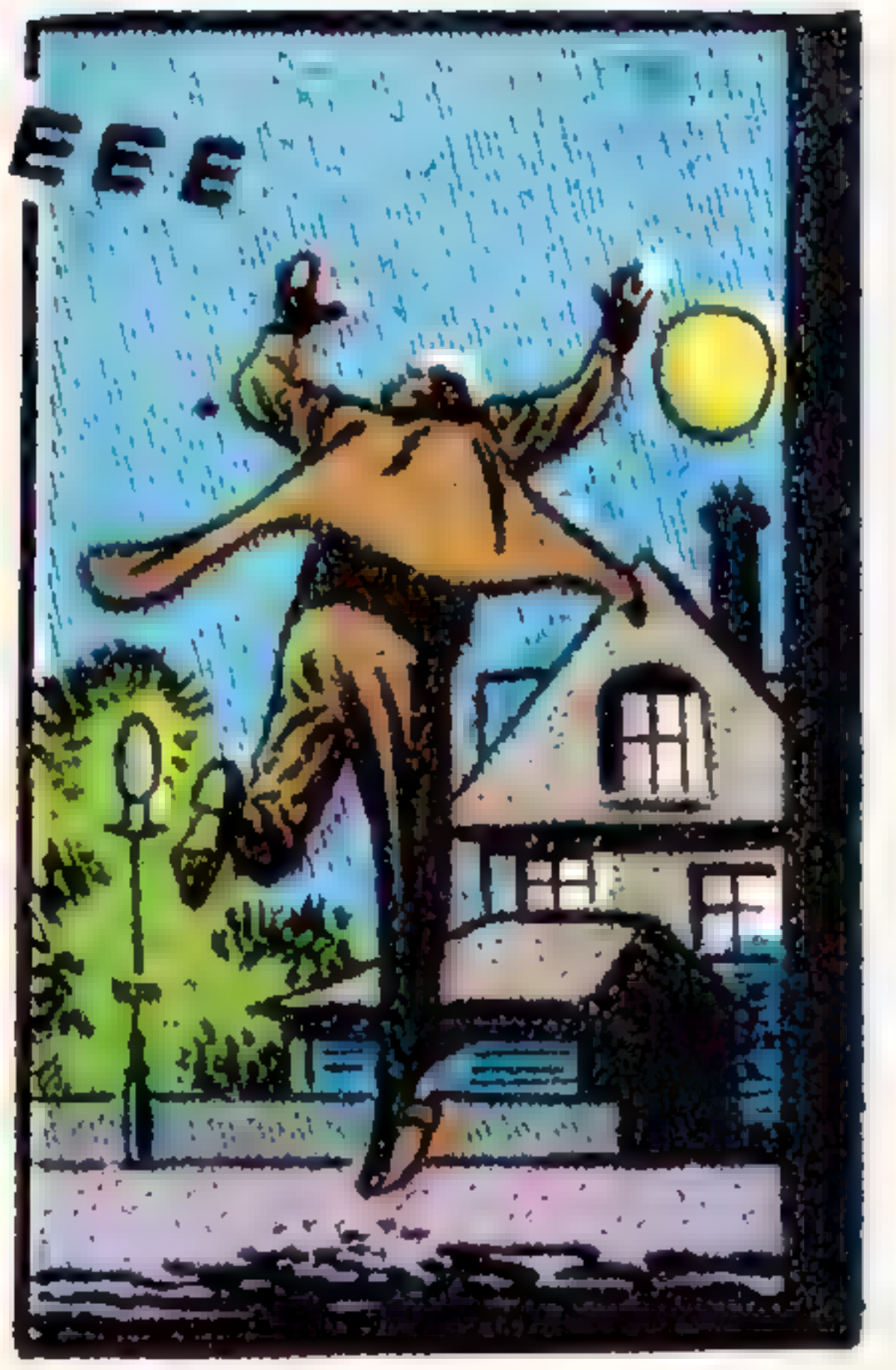
THAT'S RIGHT! AS SOON AS I SET A NEW COURSE AND LASH THE WHEEL!



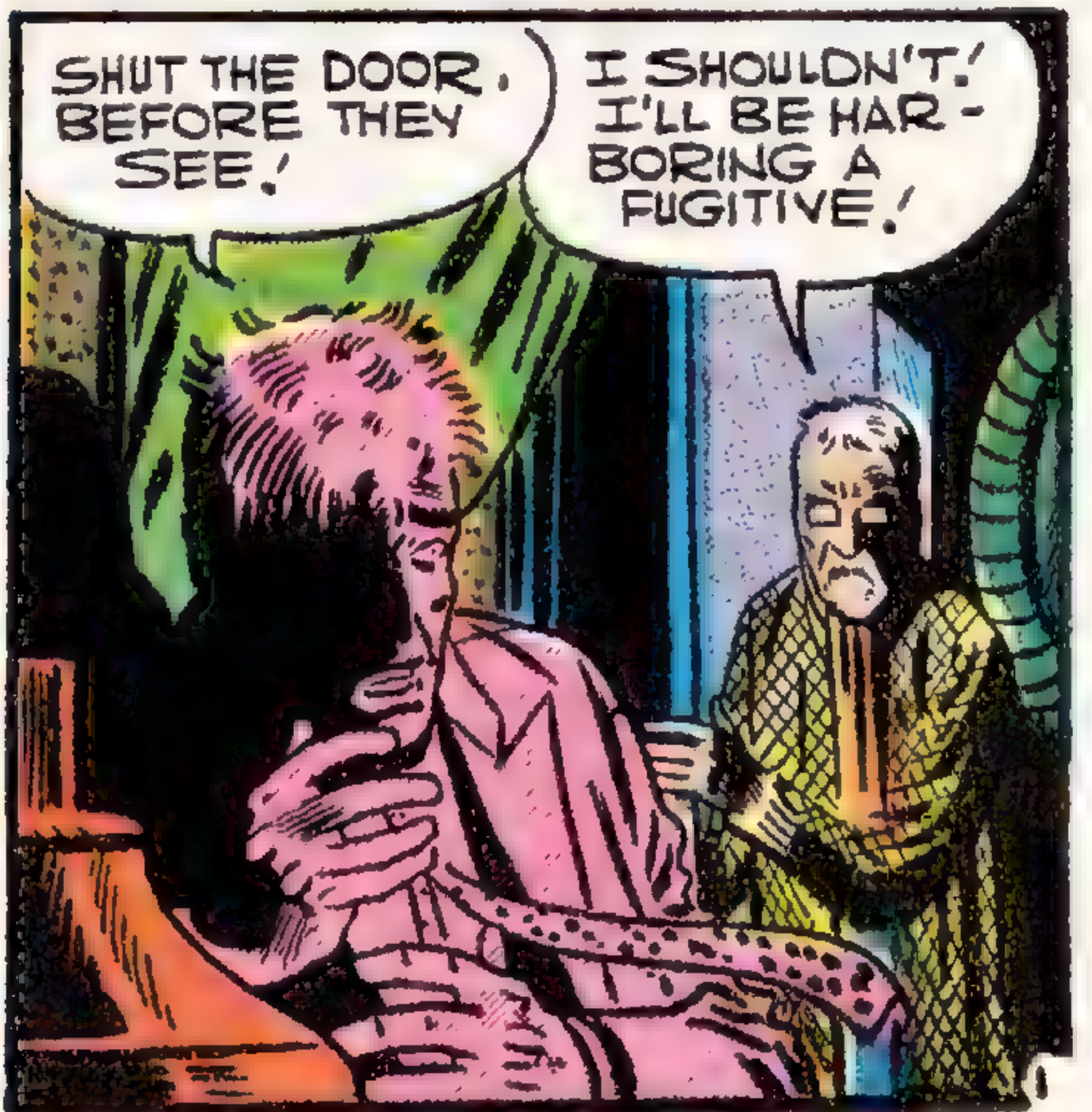
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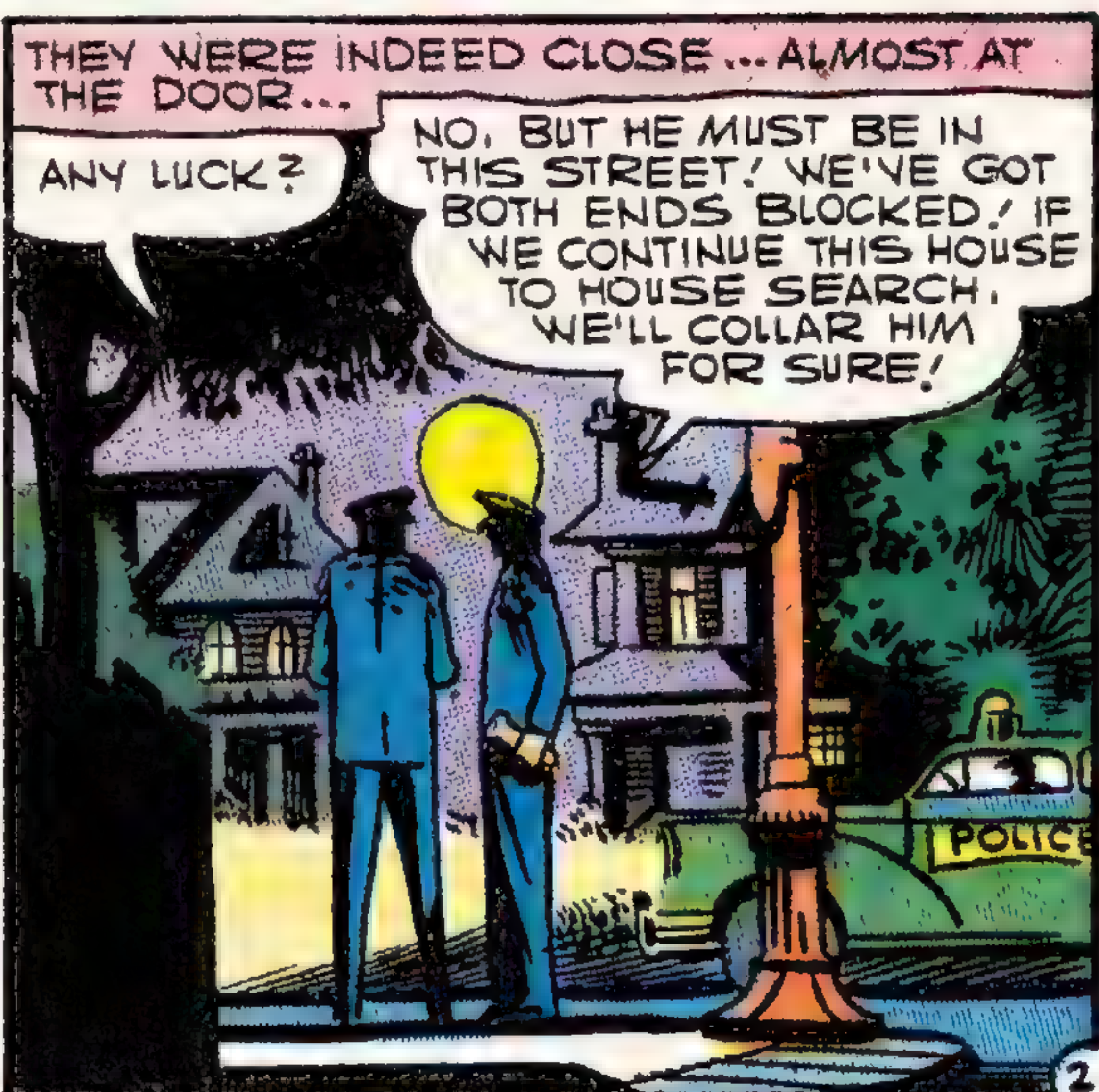
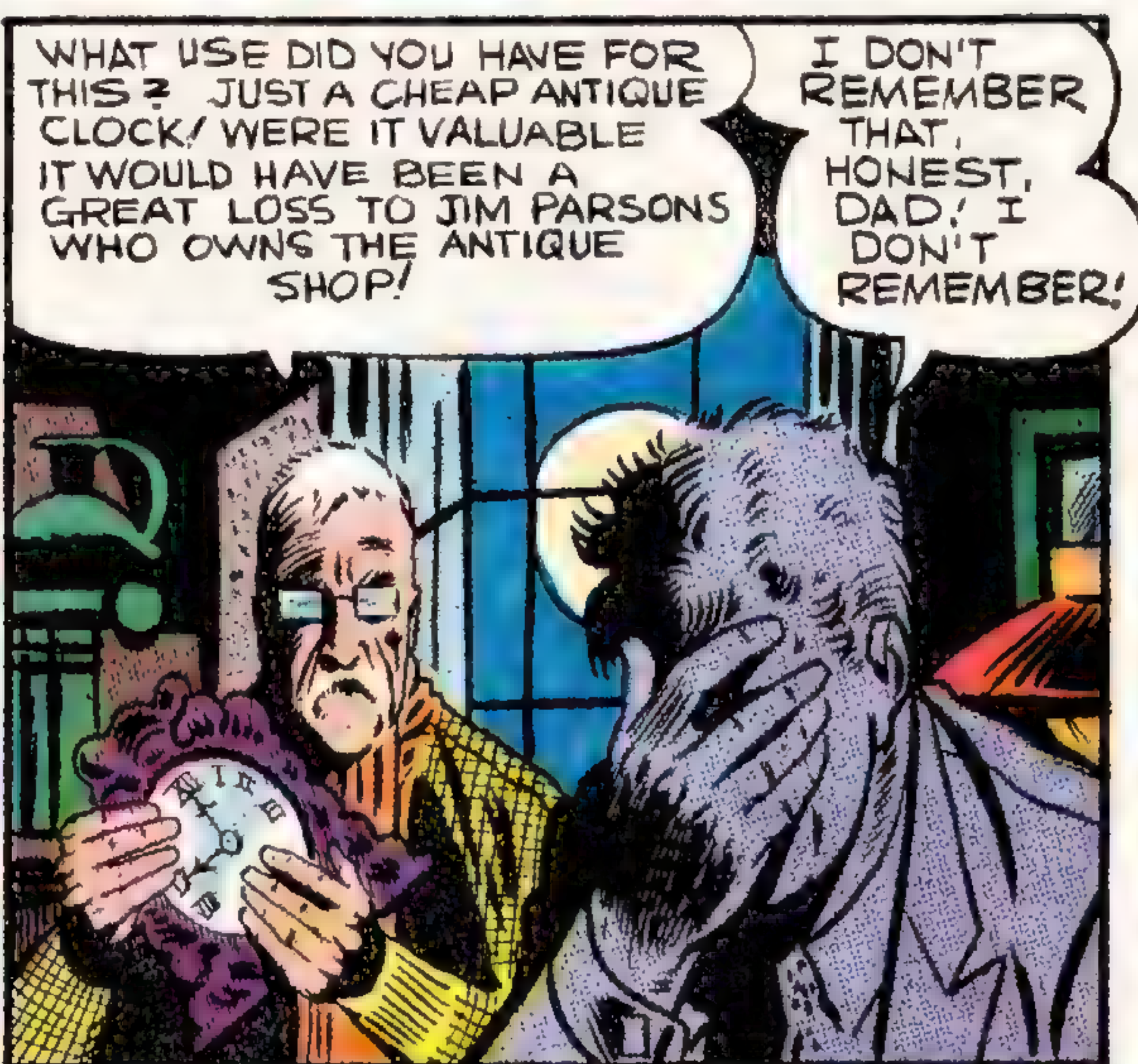
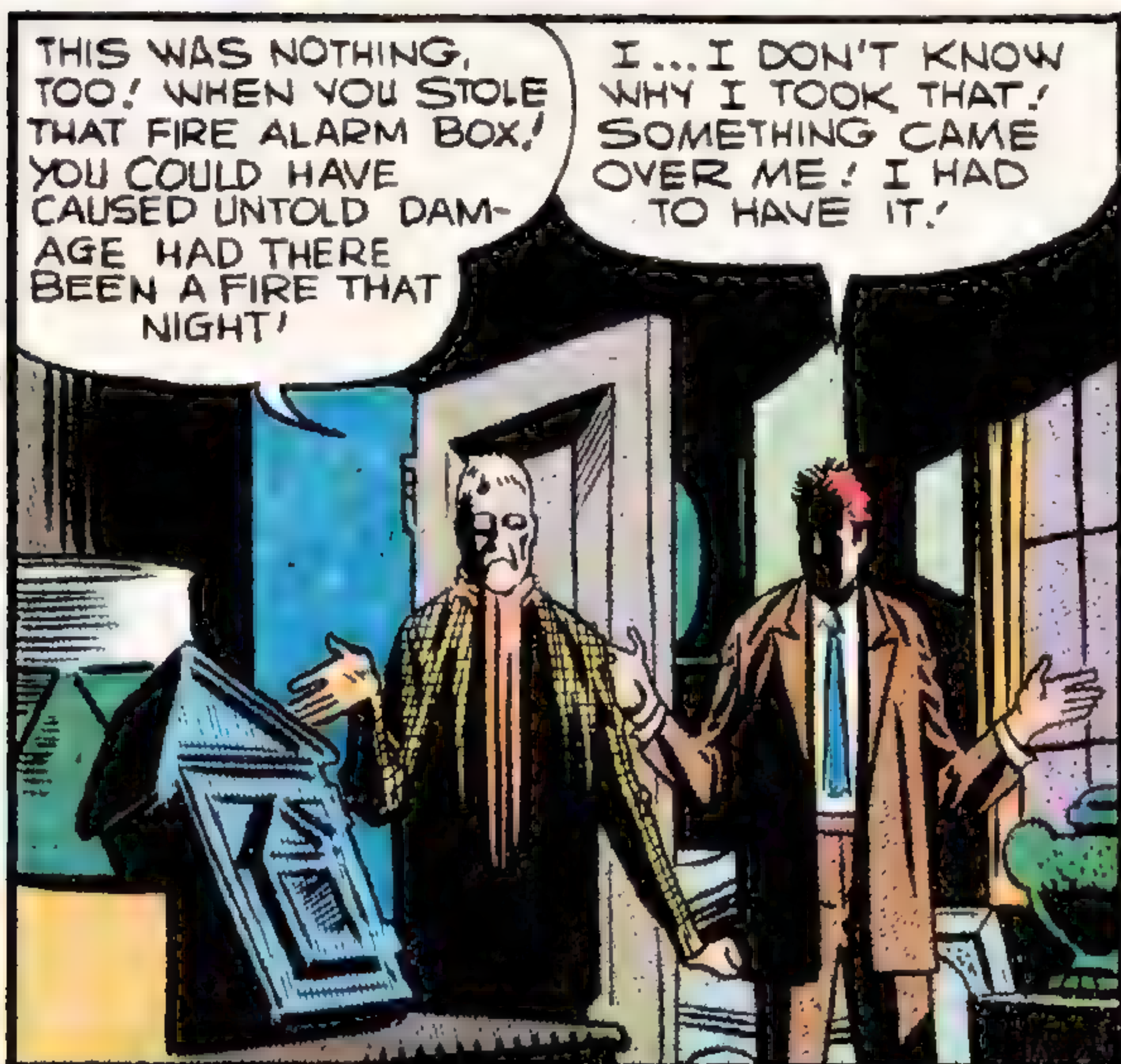
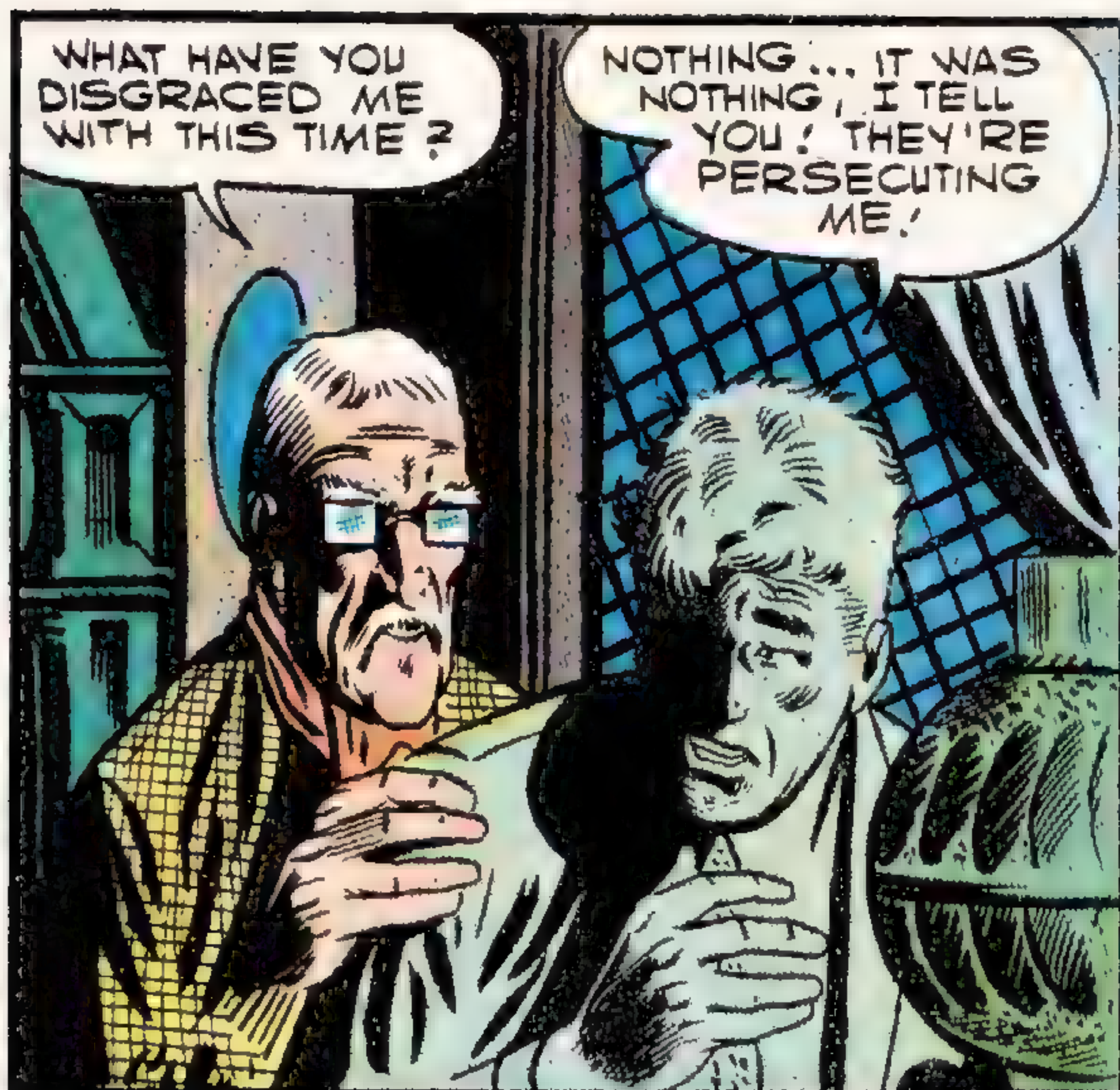


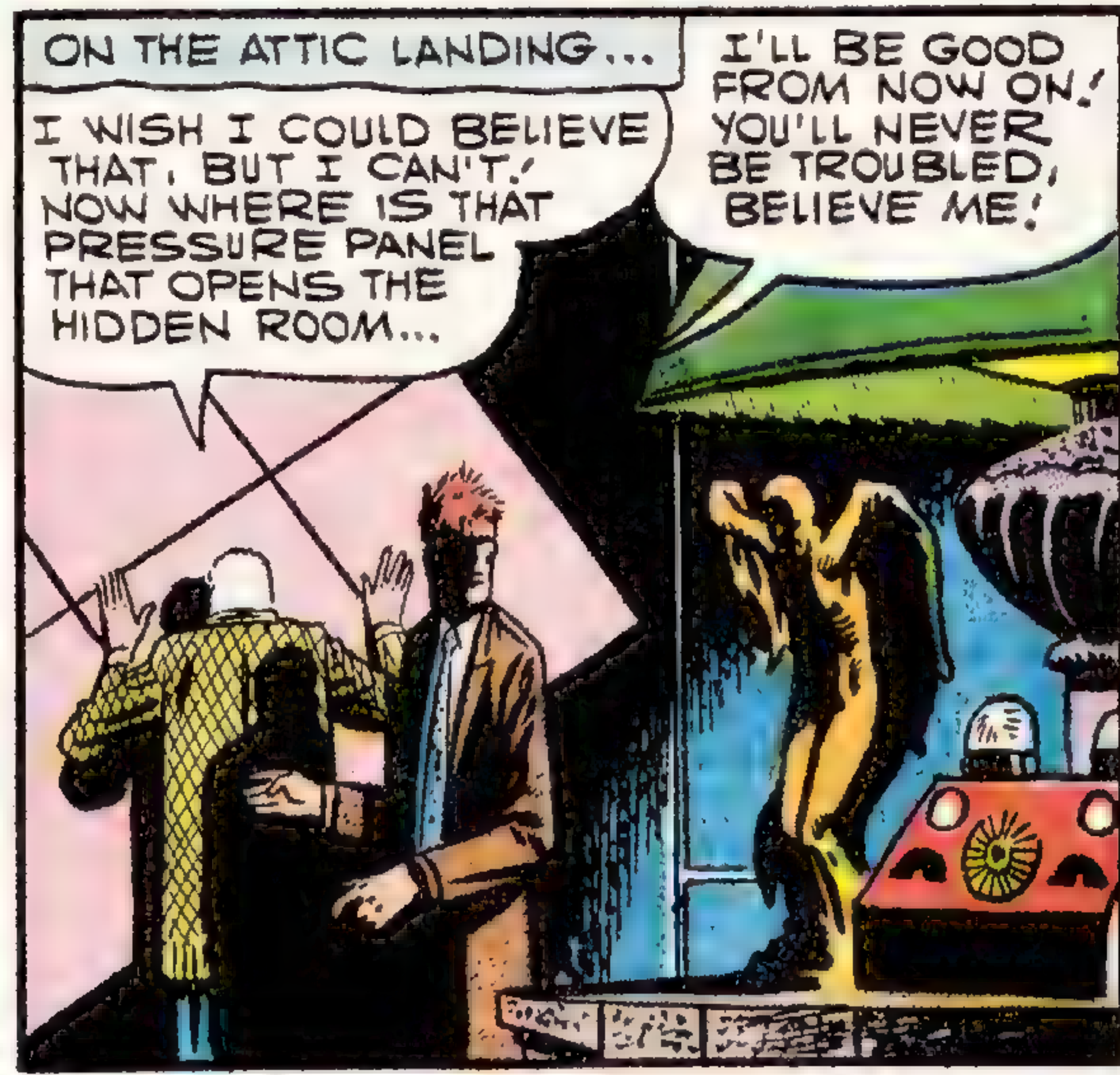
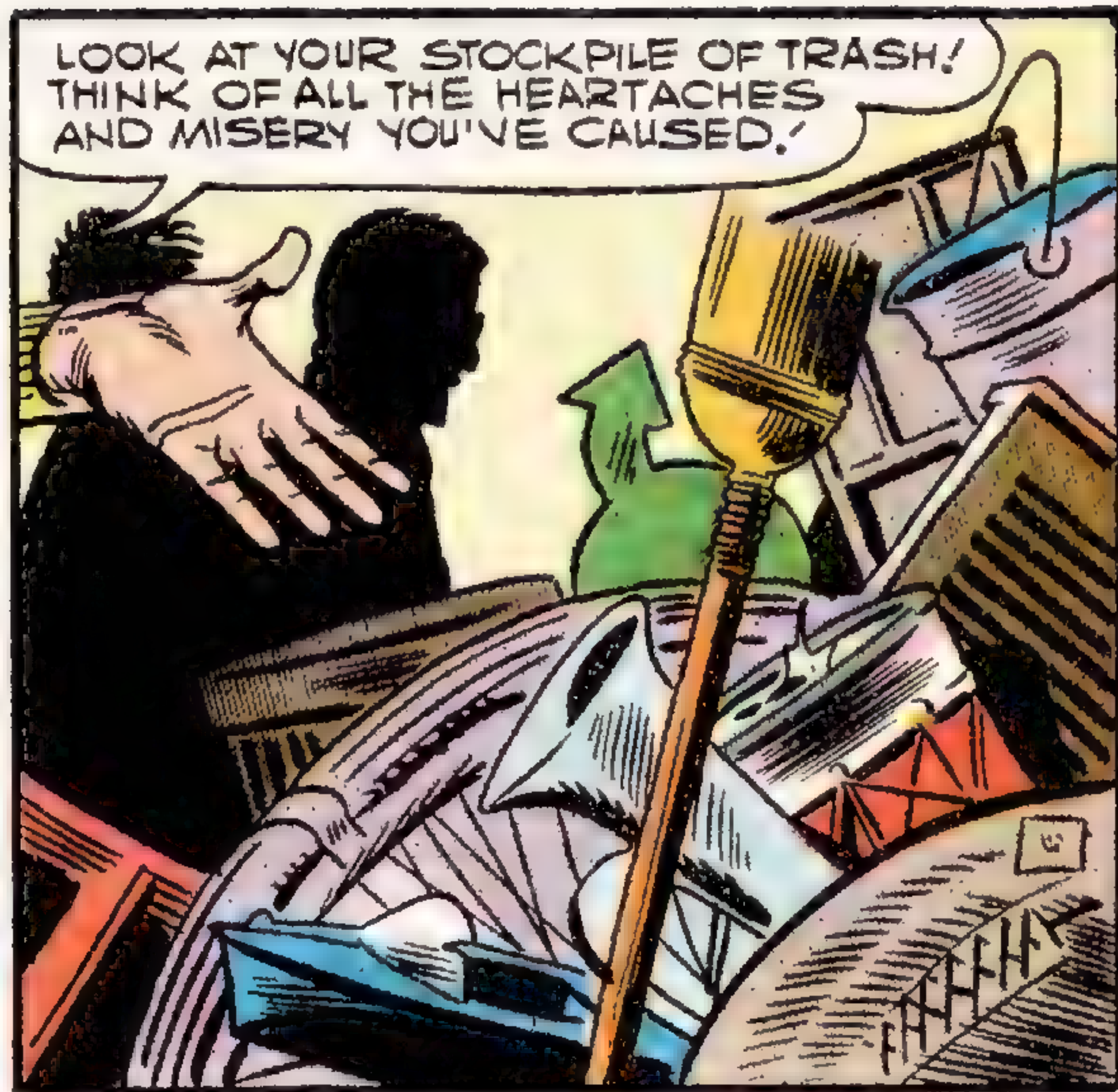
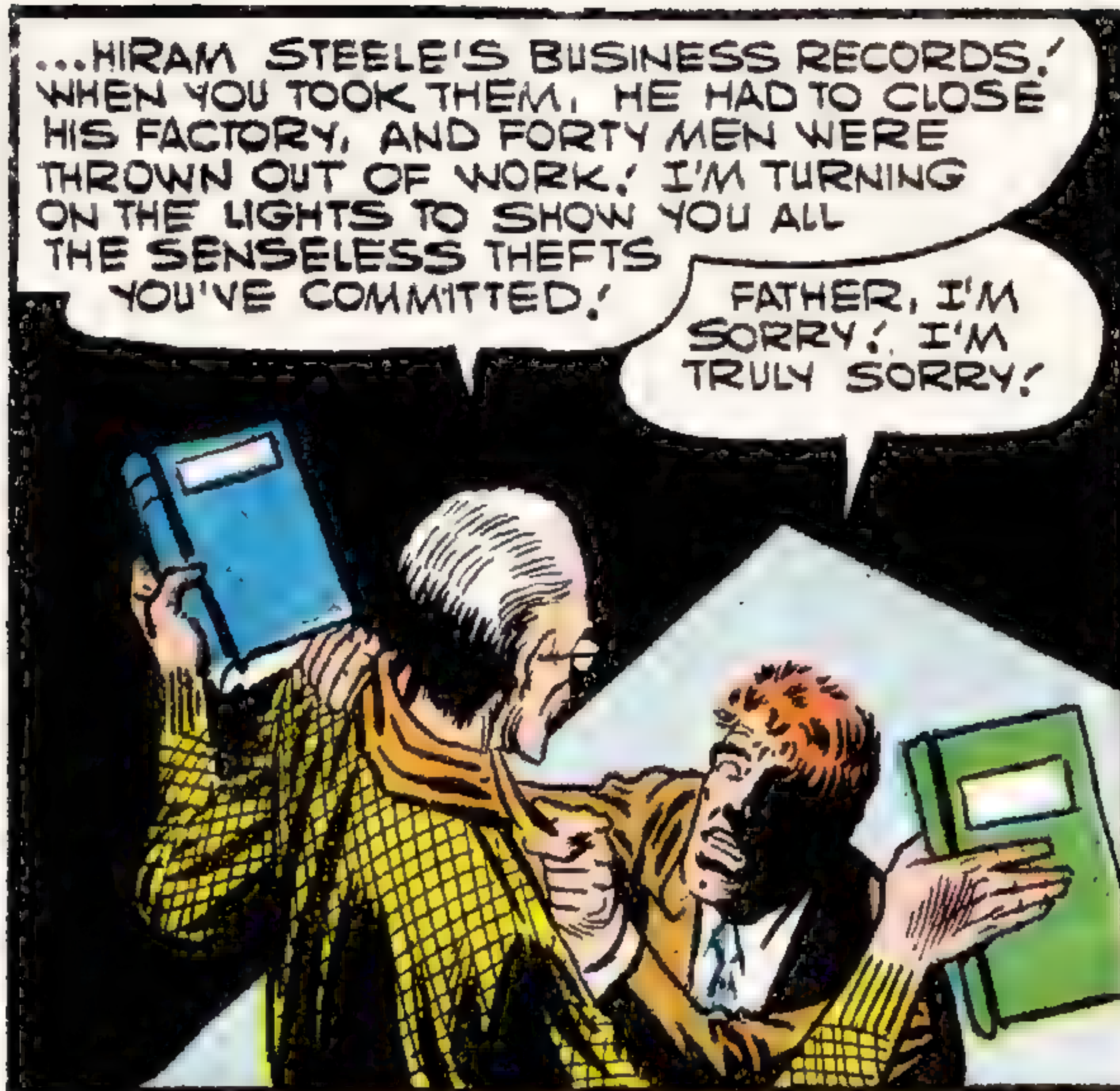
WHEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE



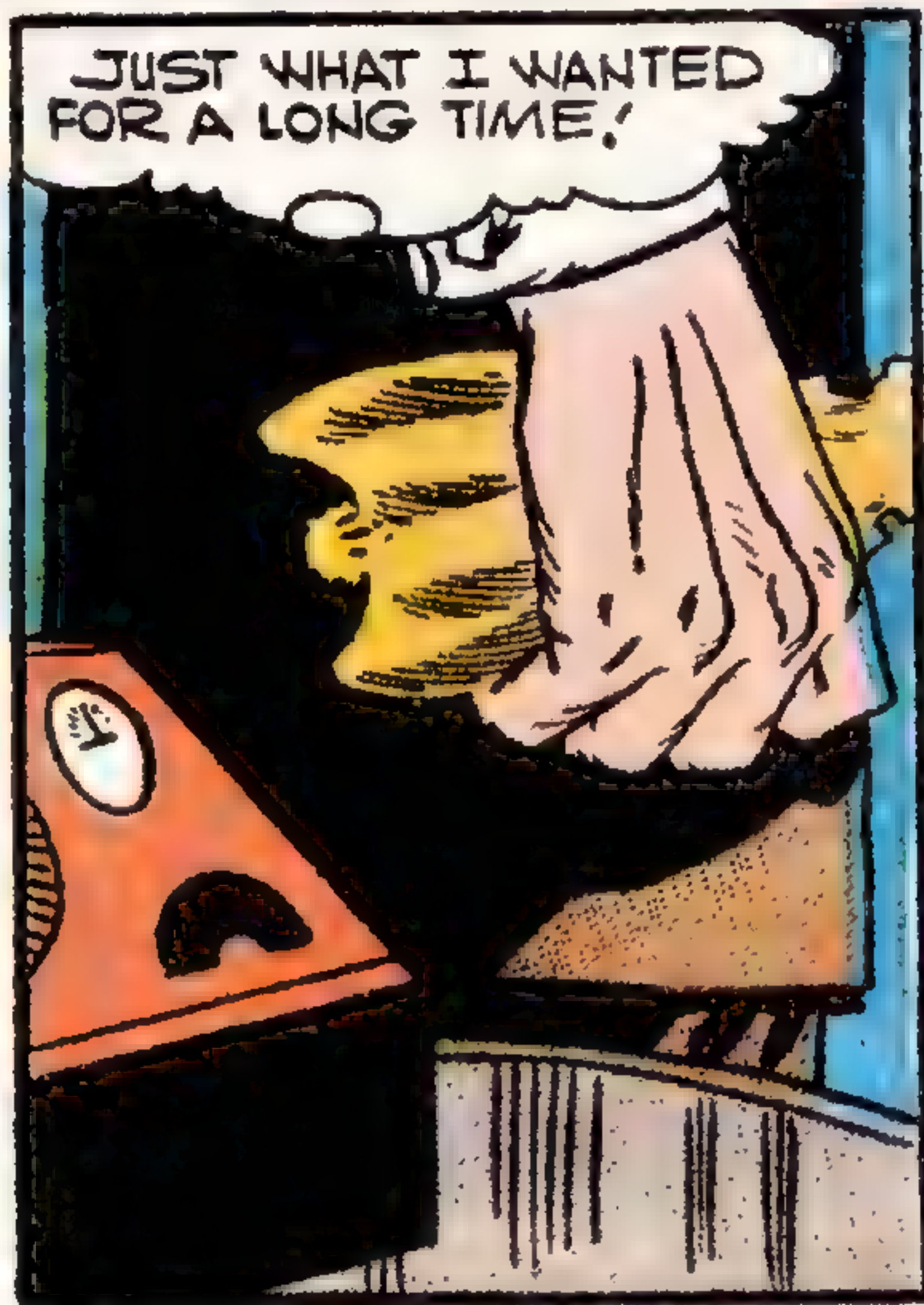
S2105

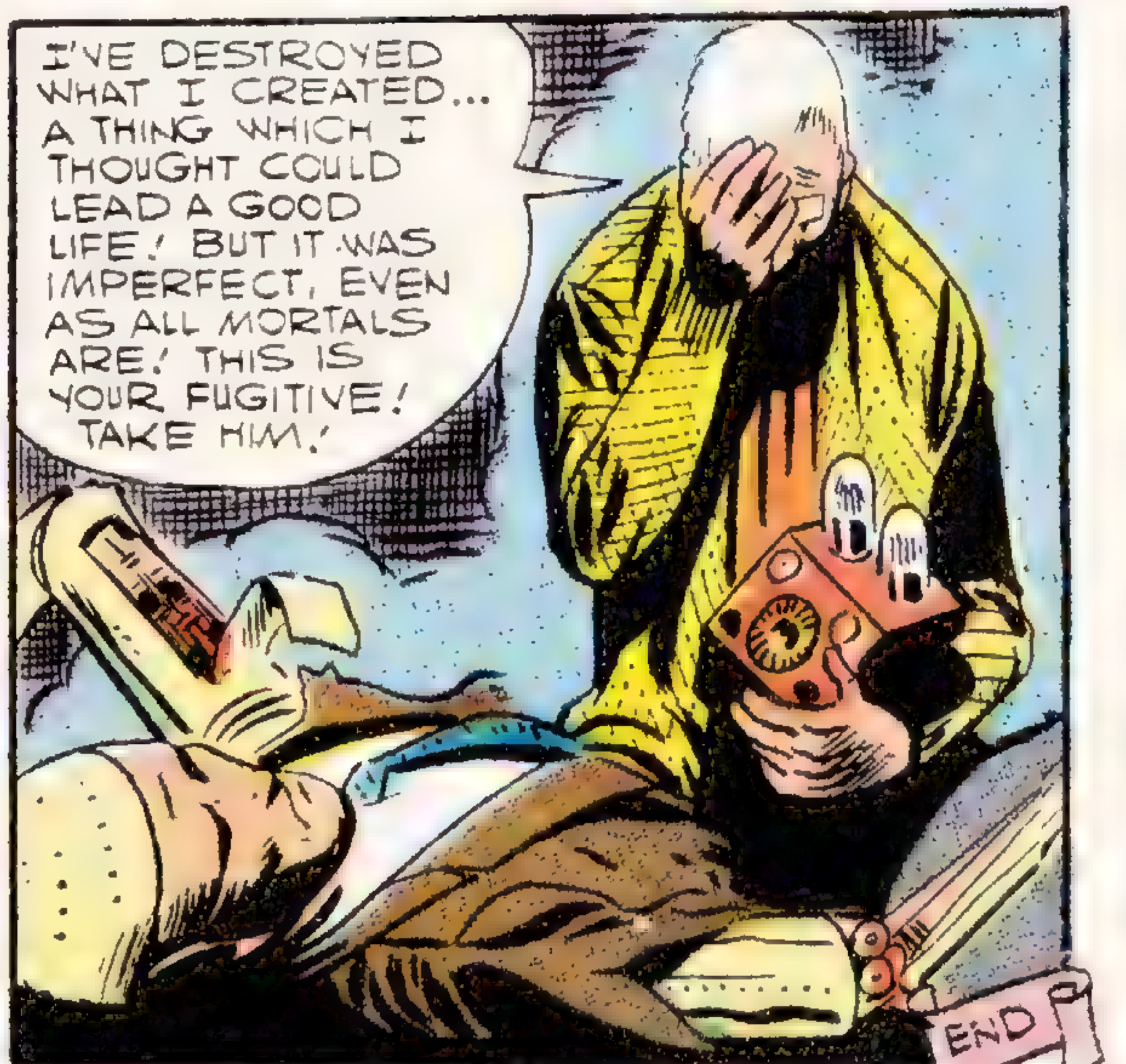
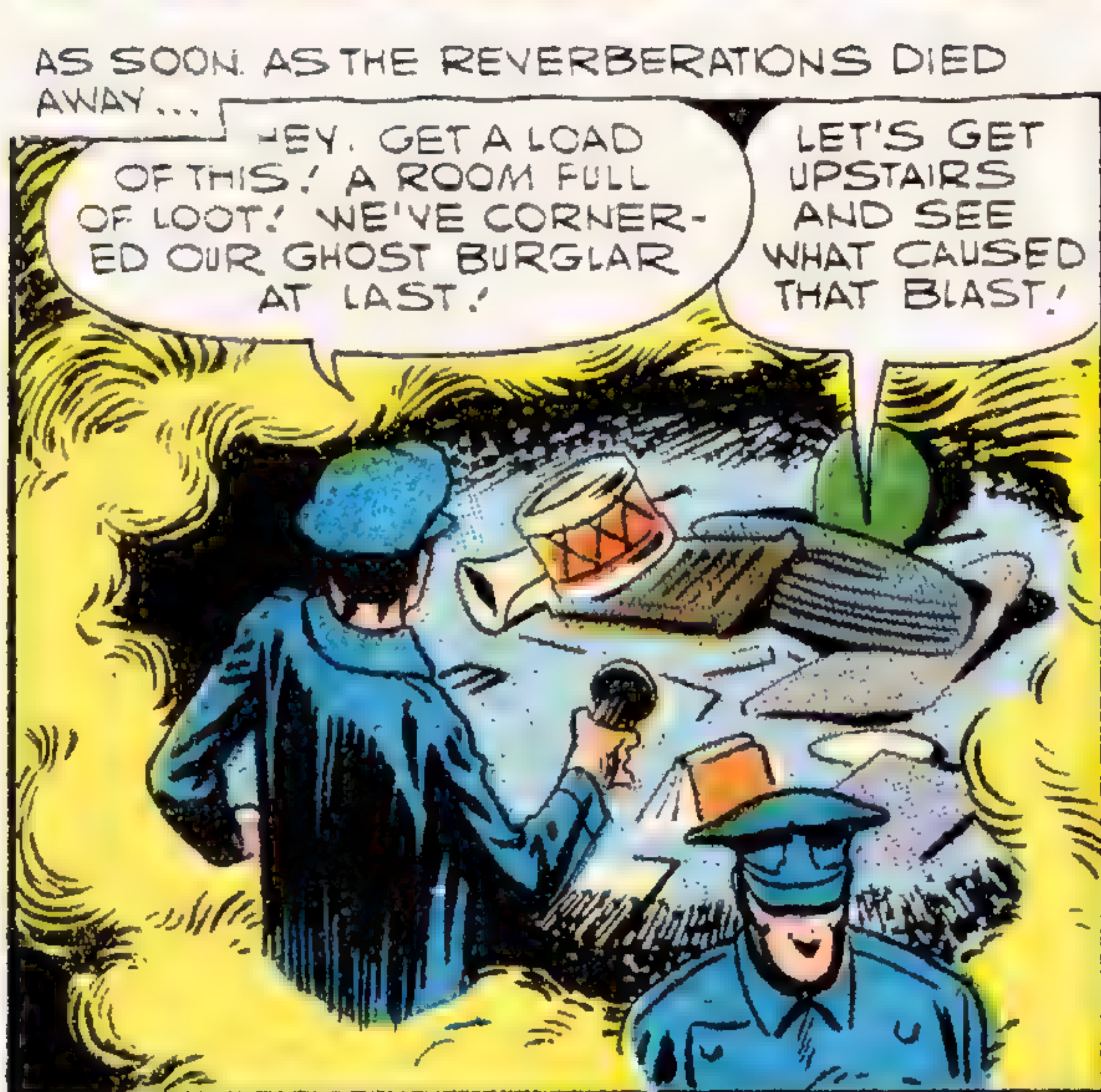
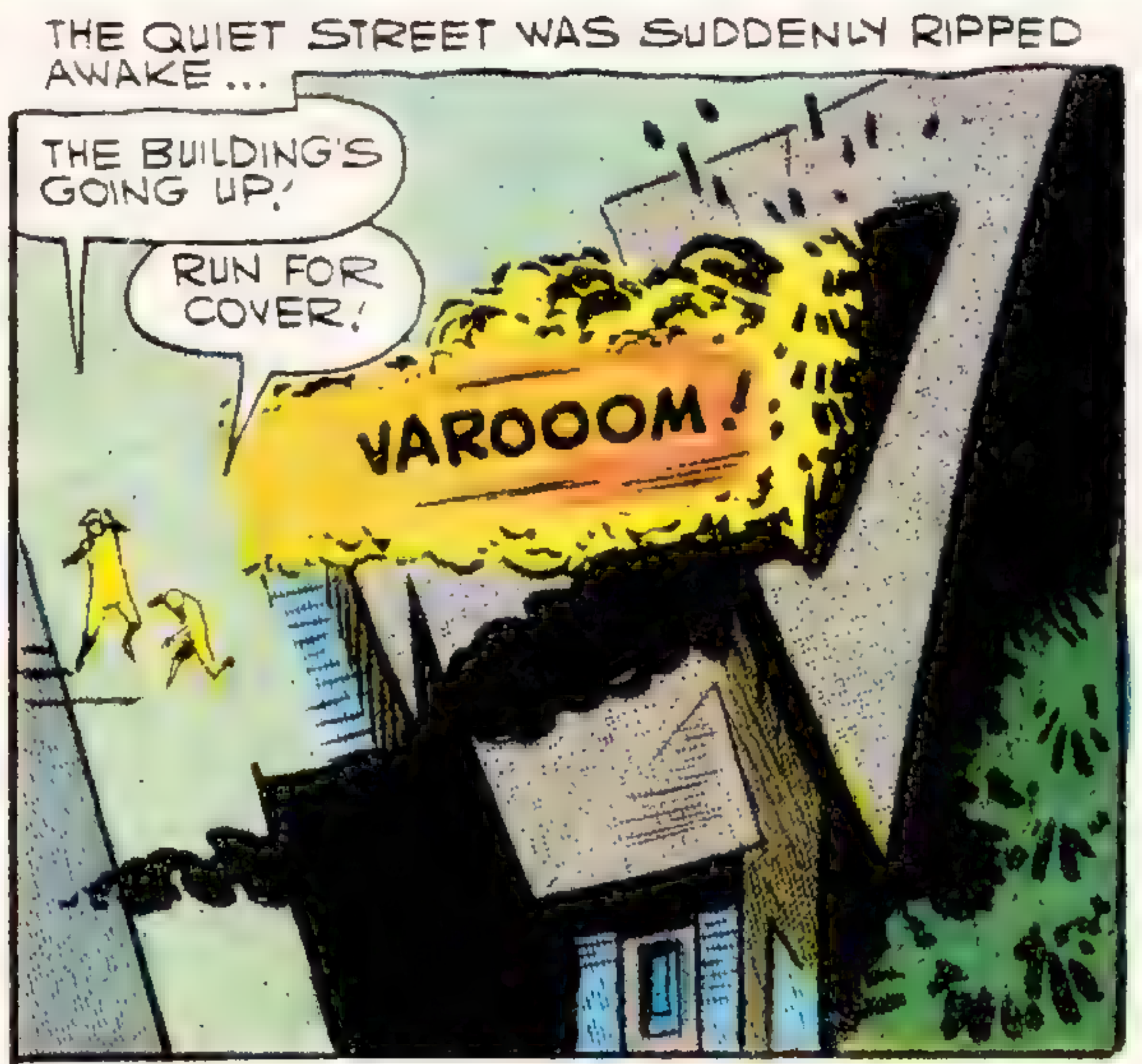
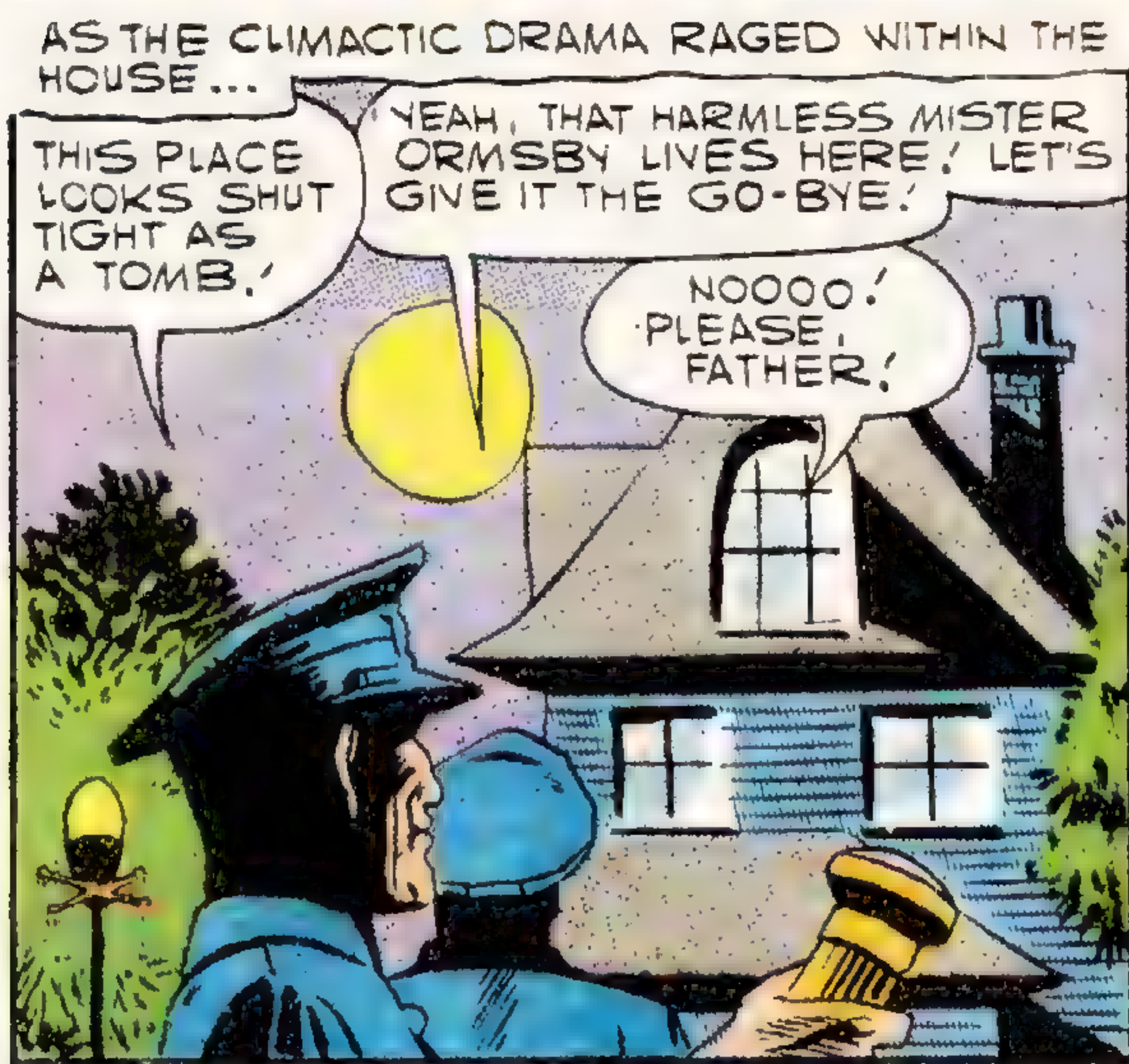
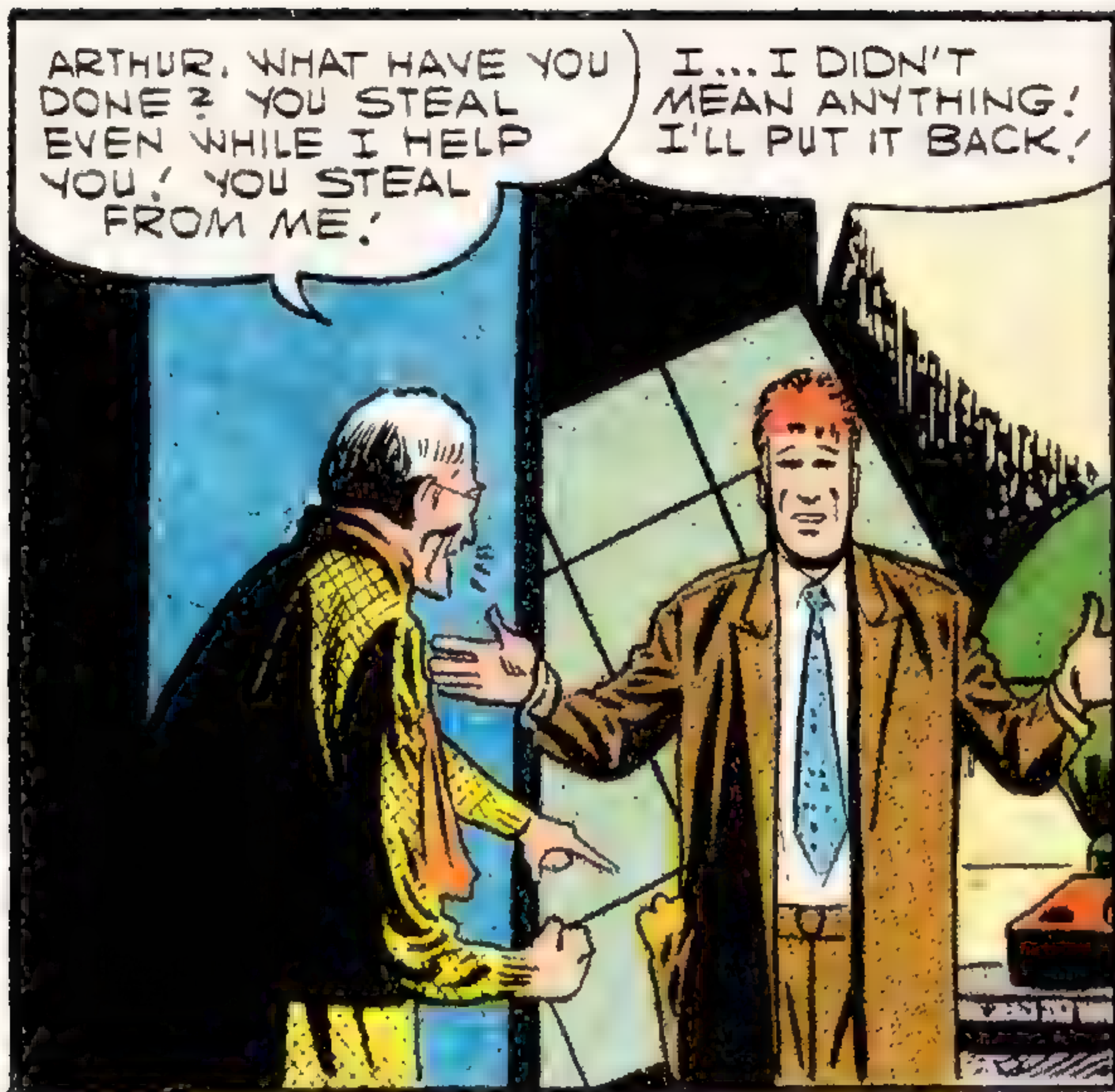






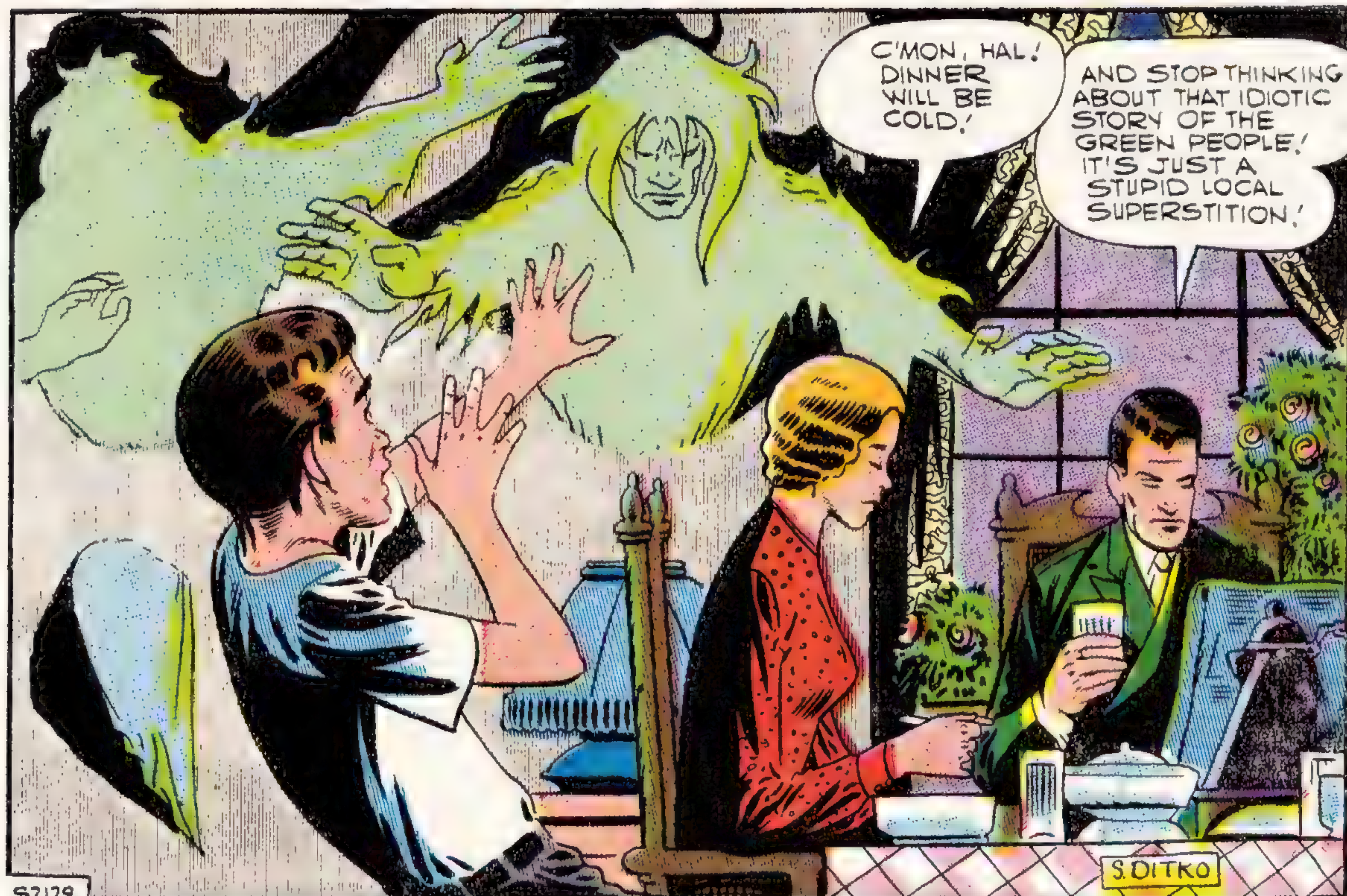
EVEN WHILE HIS SAFETY WAS BEING ASSURED...



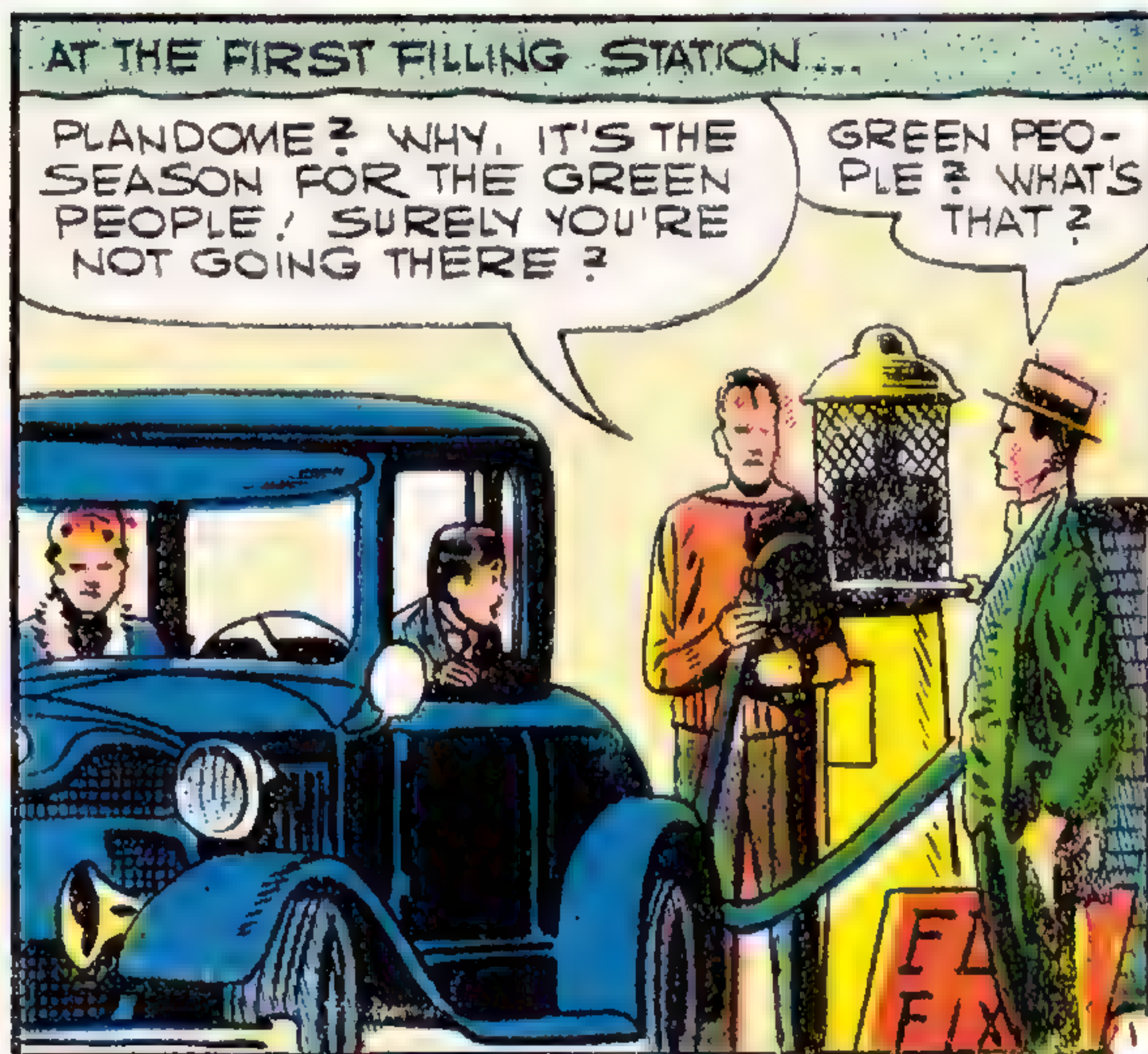
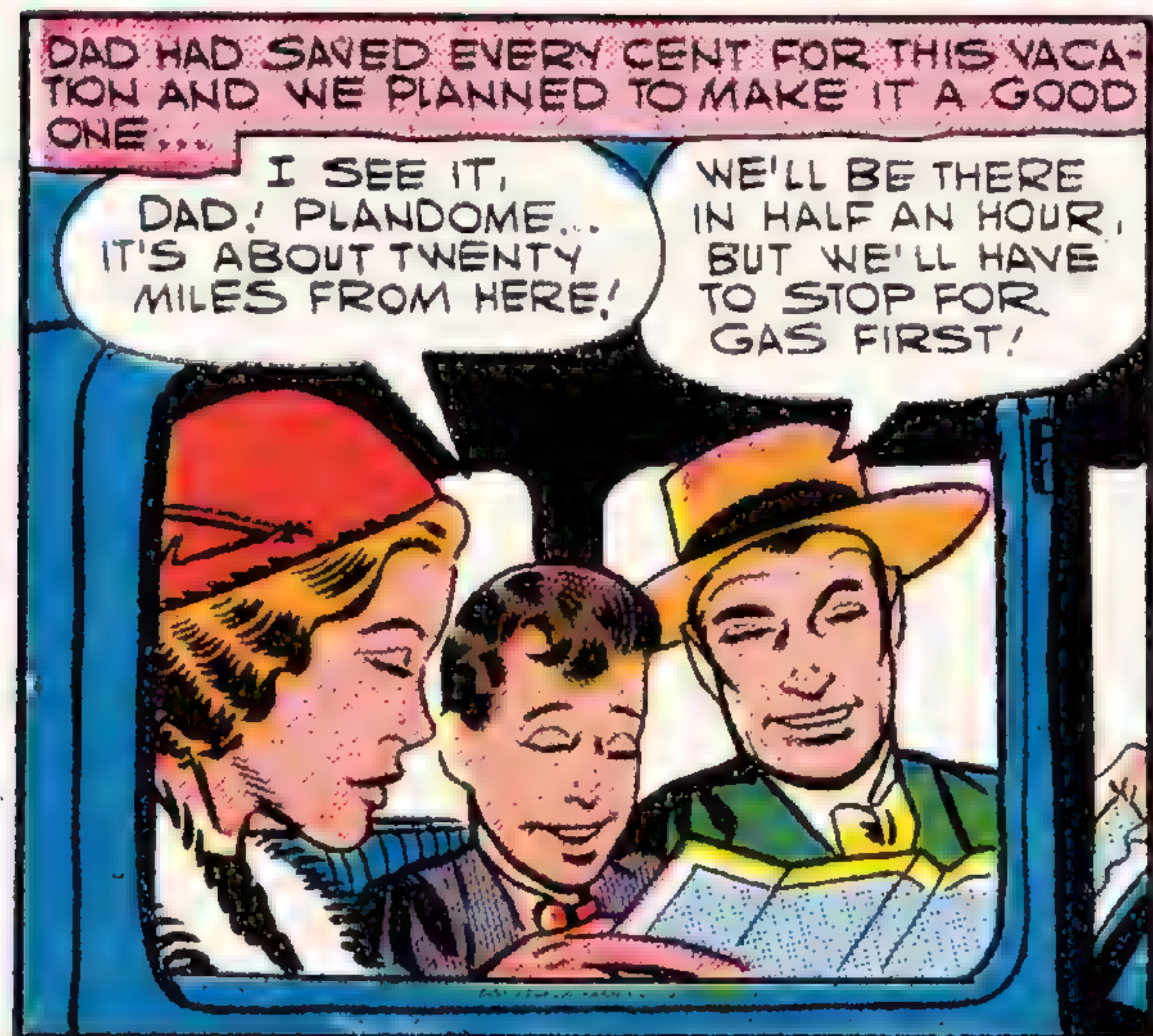


I WAS ONLY A BOY WHEN IT HAPPENED, YET THE ACCURSED MEMORY SEARED DEEPLY INTO MY BRAIN! I PLEDGED MY WHOLE EXISTENCE TOWARD ONE END -- TO ...

LIVE FOR REUNION

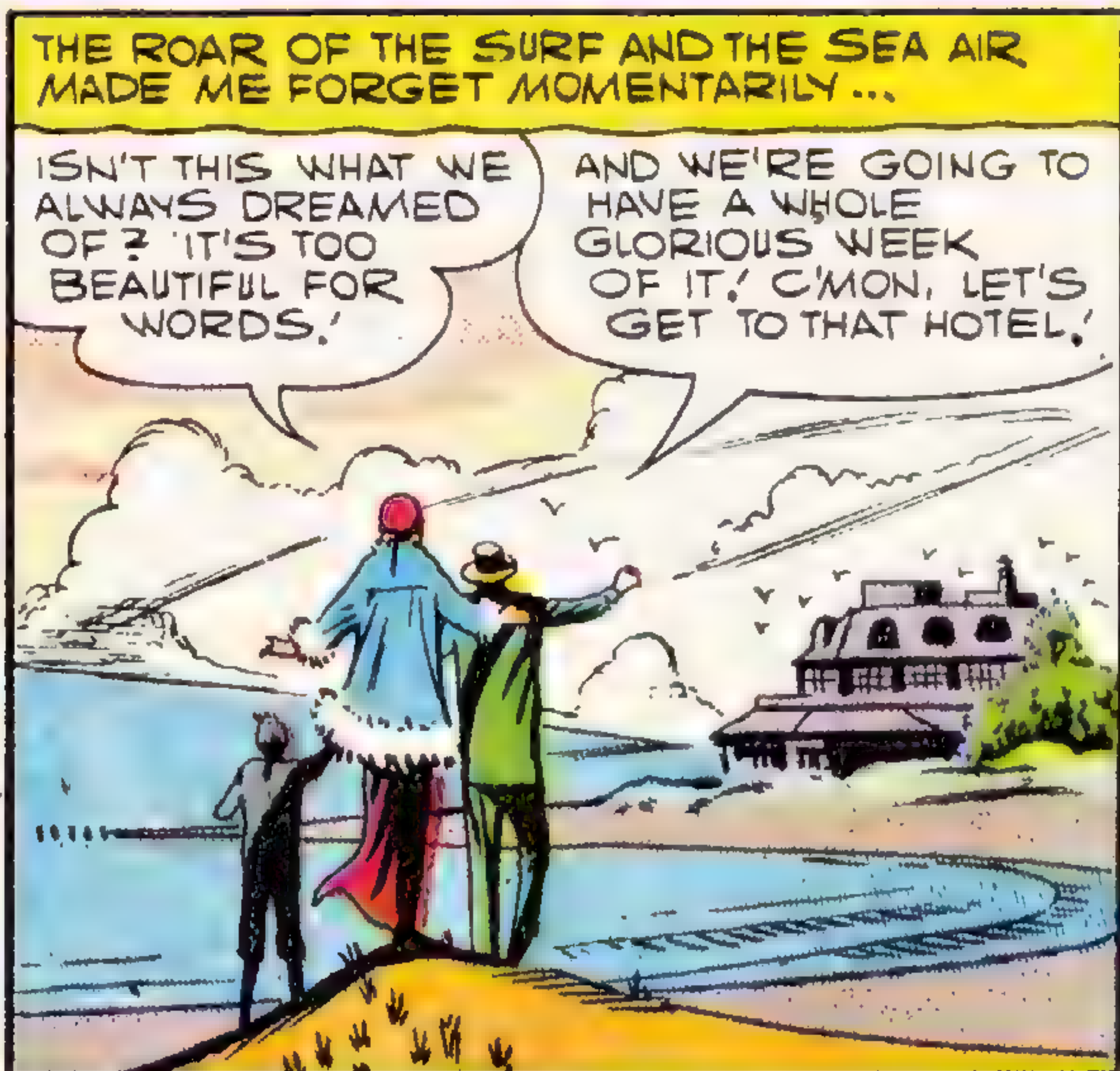
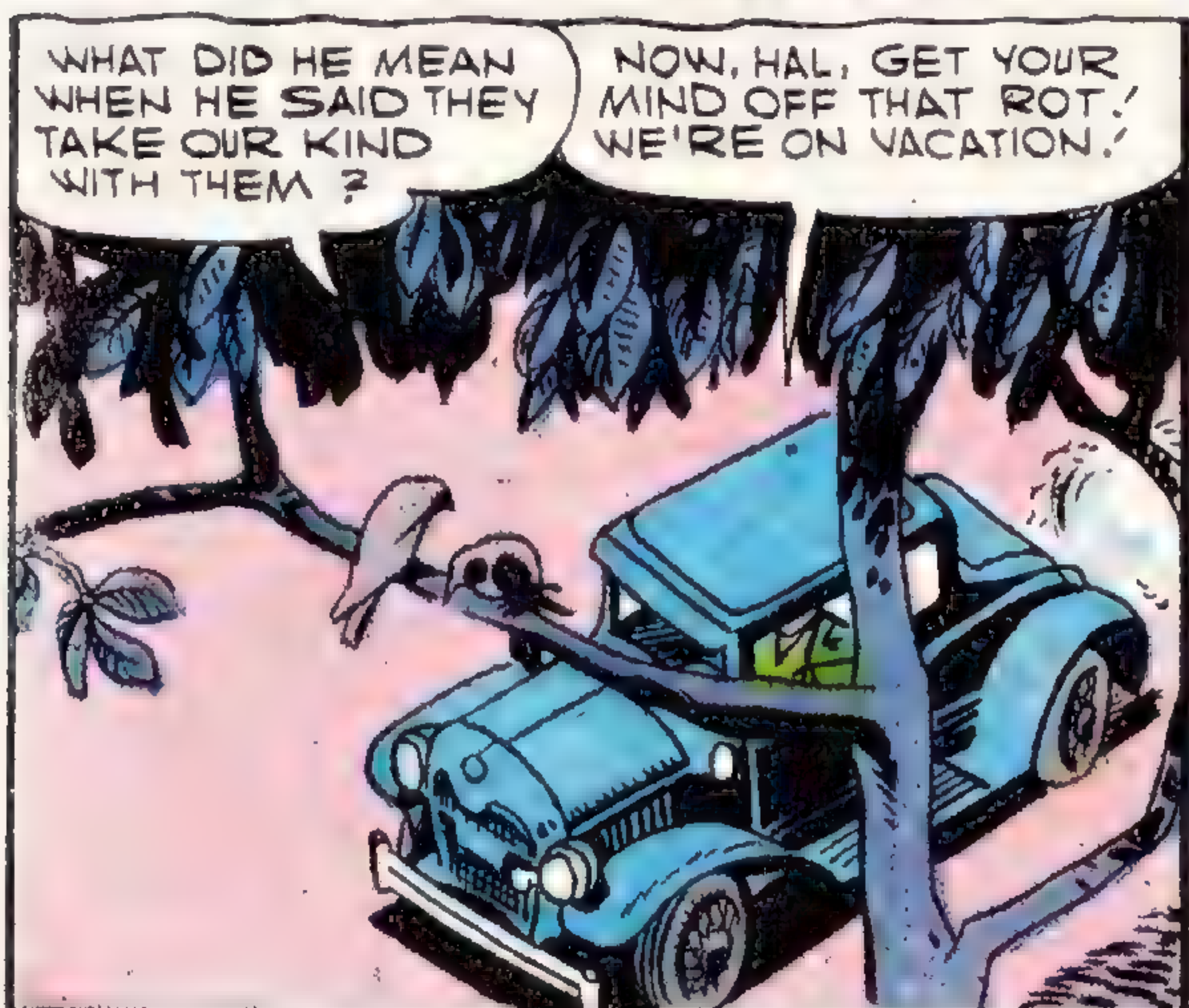


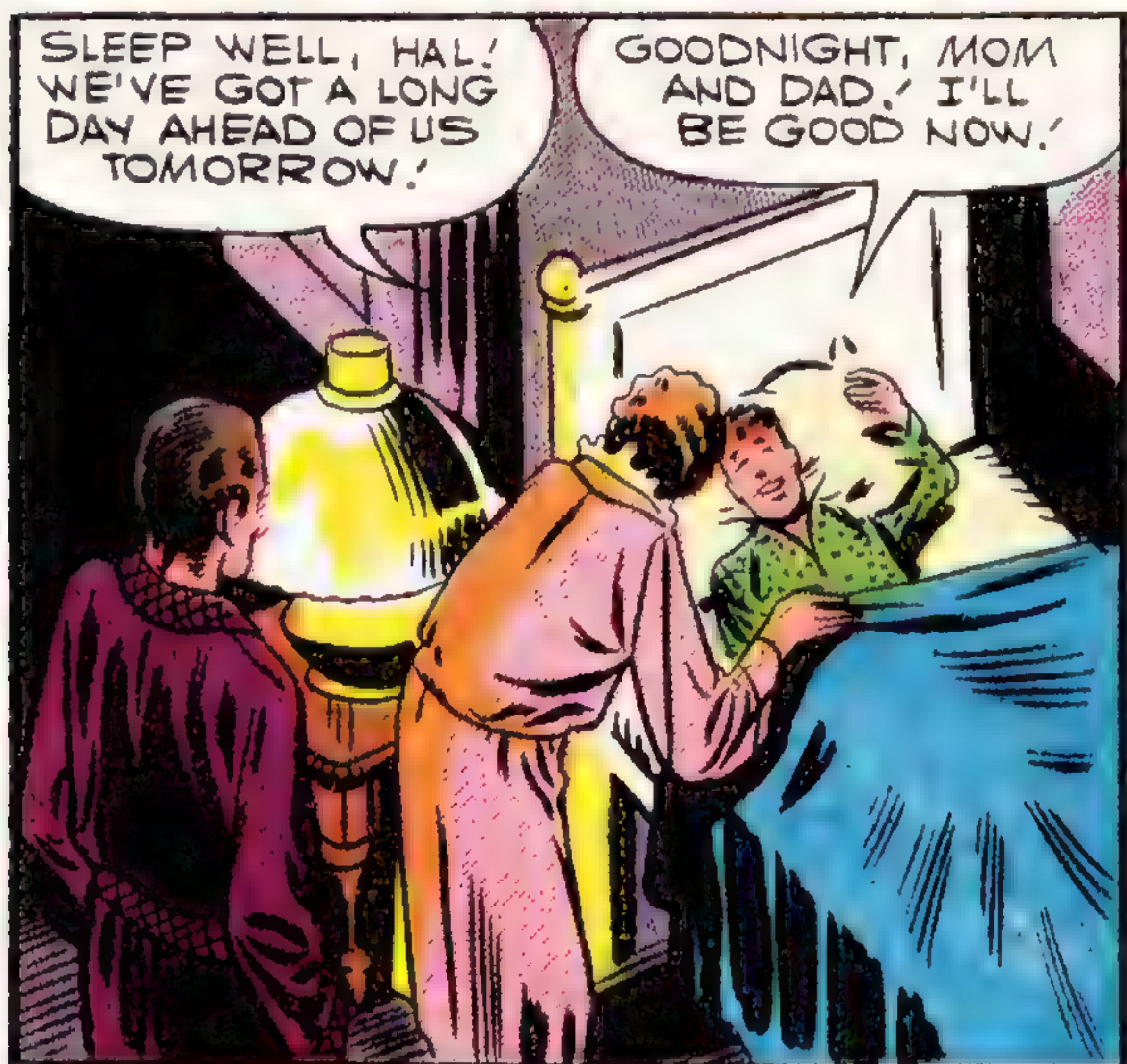
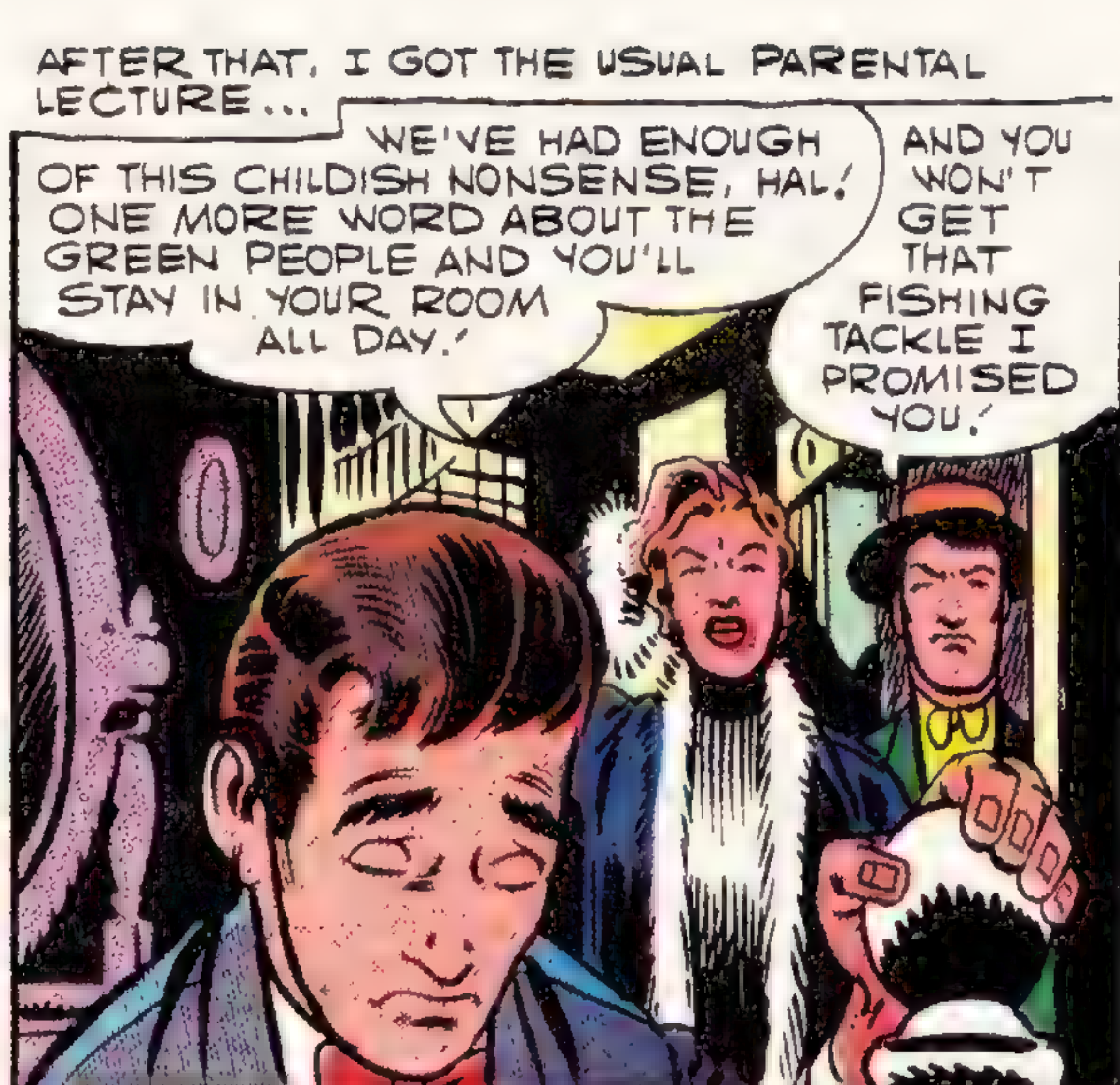
52129



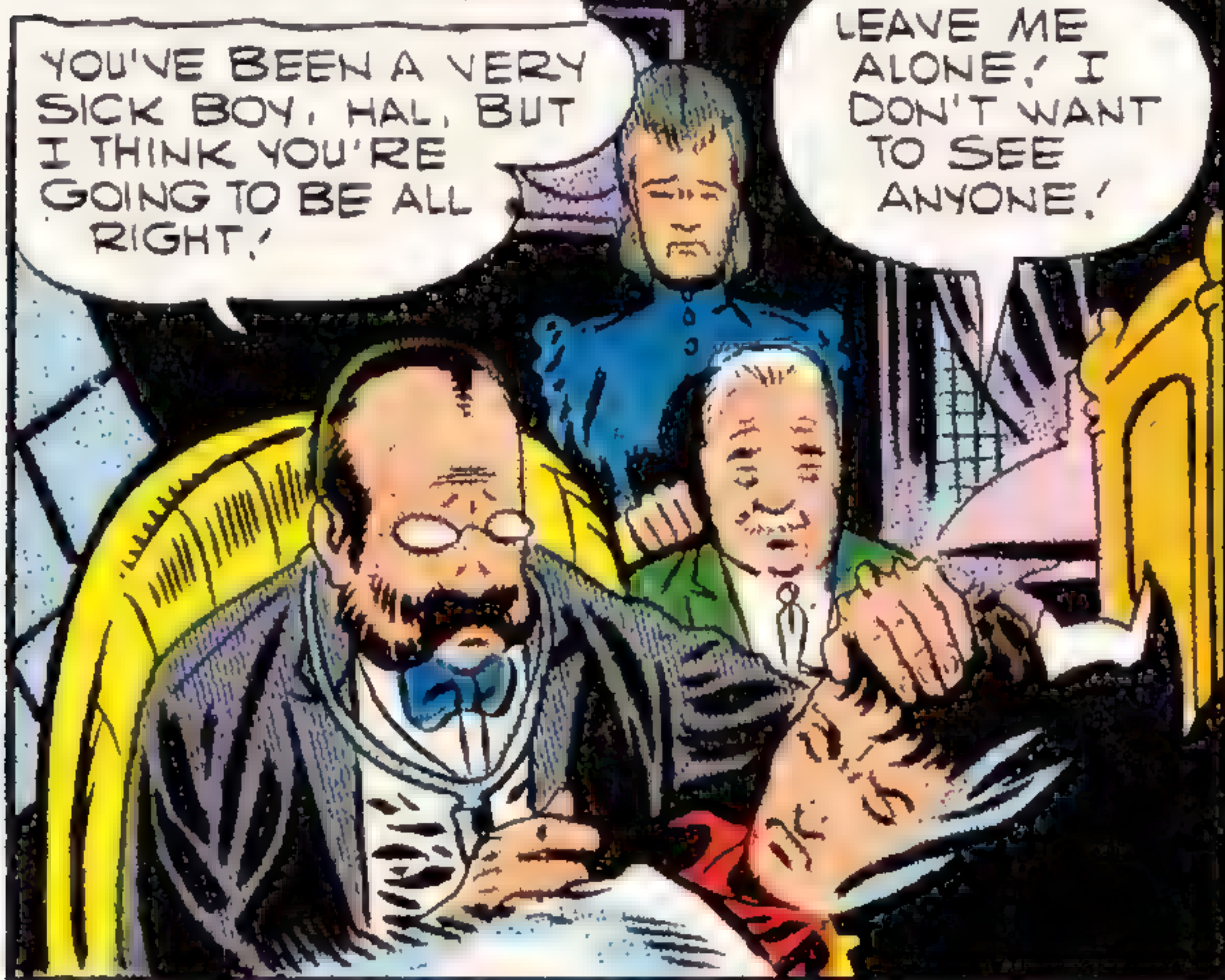


I HAD GASPED WHEN I HEARD OF THE GREEN PEOPLE, BUT TO ALL MY QUESTIONS...





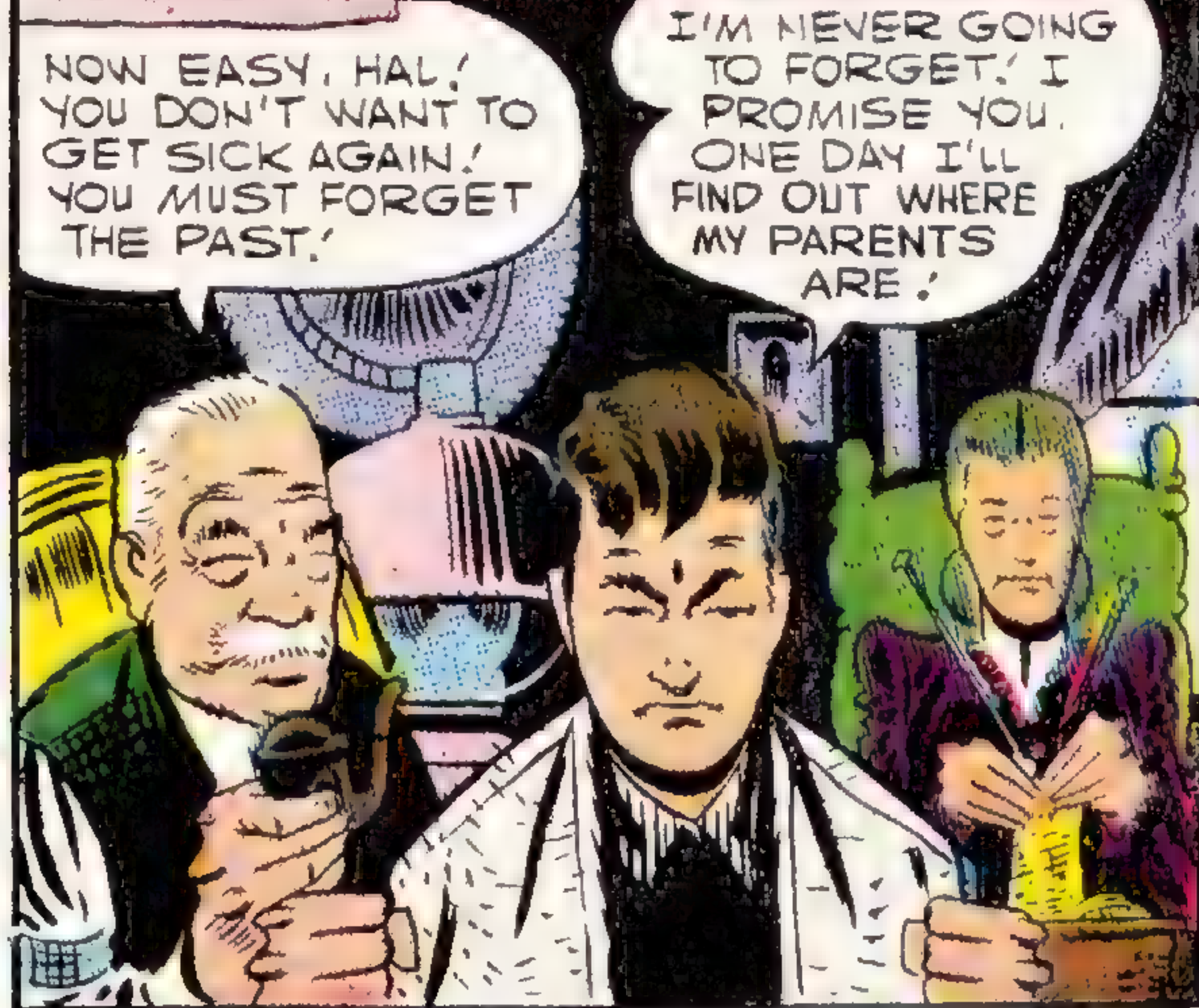
I DON'T REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THAT! IT WAS WEEKS LATER WHEN I RE-GAINED CONSCIOUSNESS IN MY GRAND-PARENTS' HOUSE ...



YOU'VE BEEN A VERY SICK BOY, HAL, BUT I THINK YOU'RE GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT!

LEAVE ME ALONE! I DON'T WANT TO SEE ANYONE!

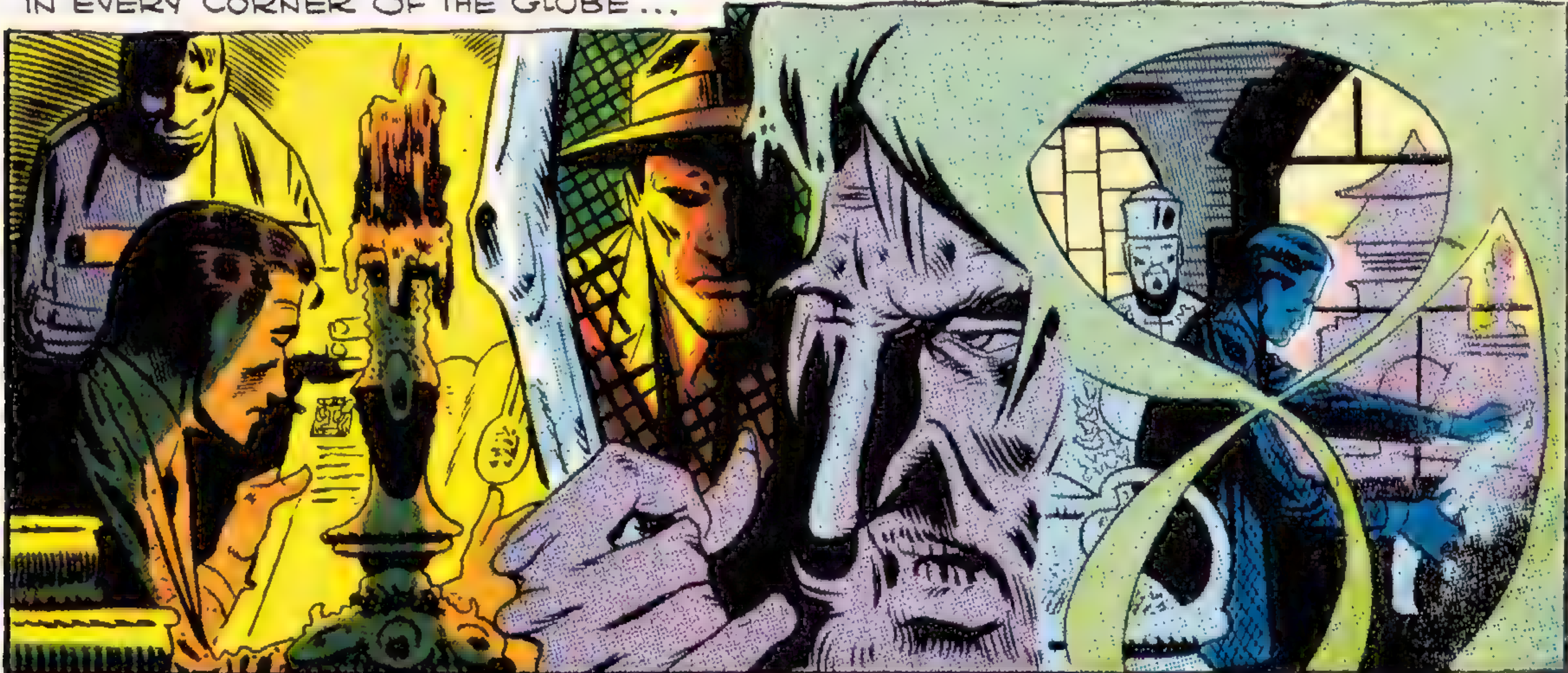
I THOUGHT ABOUT MY PARENTS ALL THE TIME I WAS SICK, AND WHEN I WAS FULLY RECOVERED...



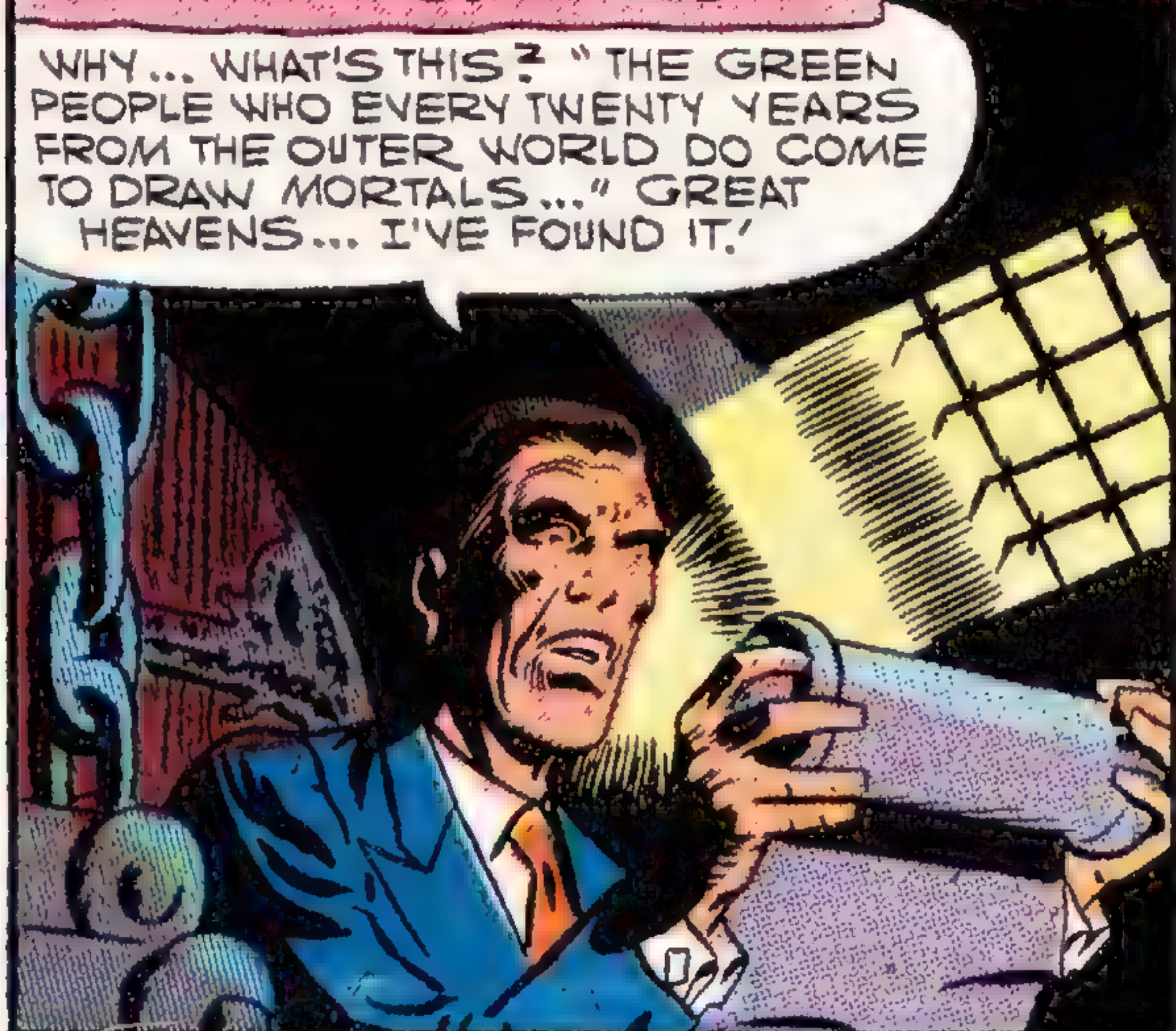
NOW EASY, HAL! YOU DON'T WANT TO GET SICK AGAIN! YOU MUST FORGET THE PAST!

I'M NEVER GOING TO FORGET! I PROMISE YOU. ONE DAY I'LL FIND OUT WHERE MY PARENTS ARE!

MY THIRST FOR CLUES GREW AS I MATURED! I SOUGHT THE CLUE TO THE GREEN PEOPLE IN EVERY CORNER OF THE GLOBE ...

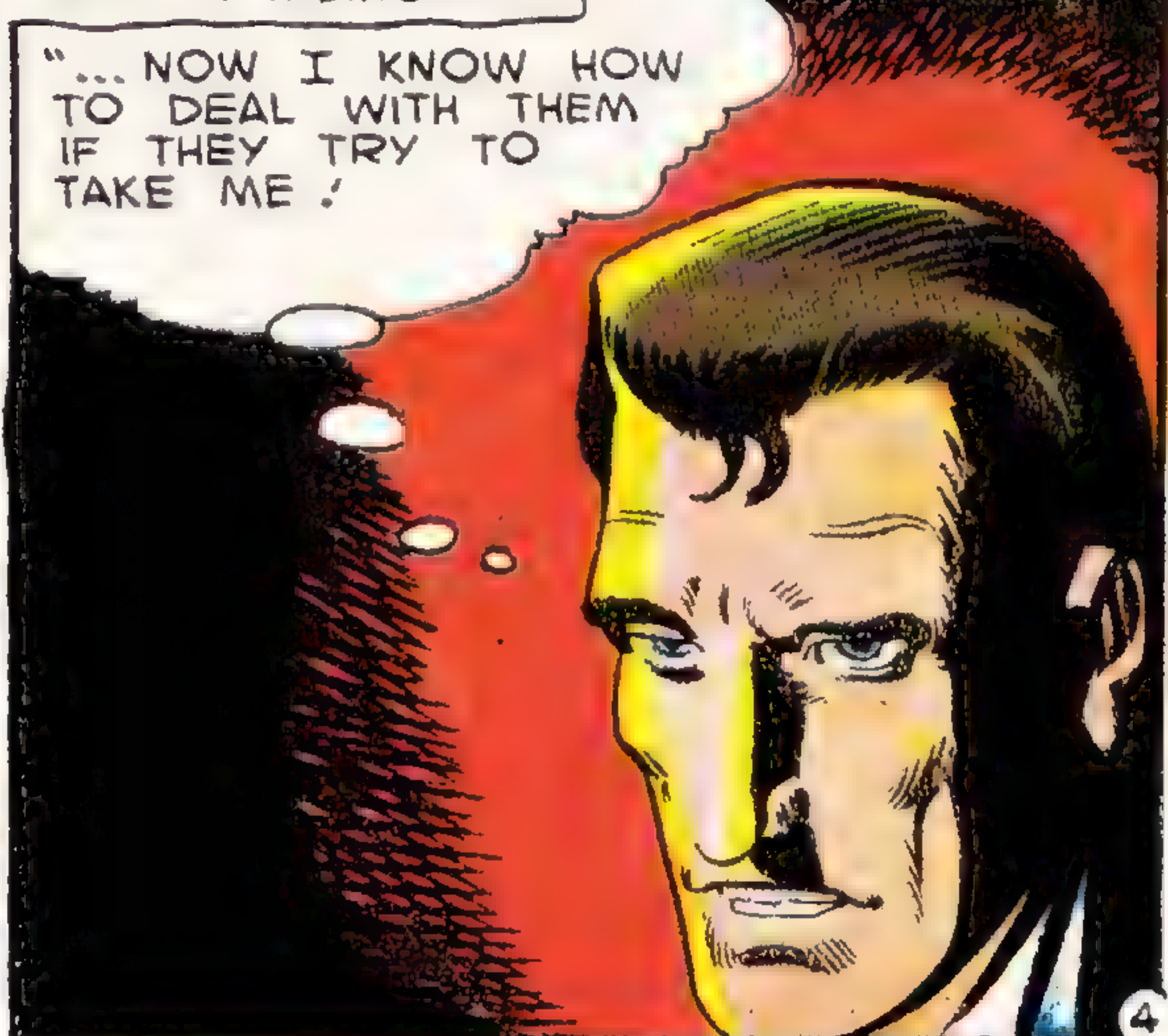


I HAD ALMOST GIVEN UP HOPE, WHEN ONE DAY IN A LUXEMBOURG ABBEY...



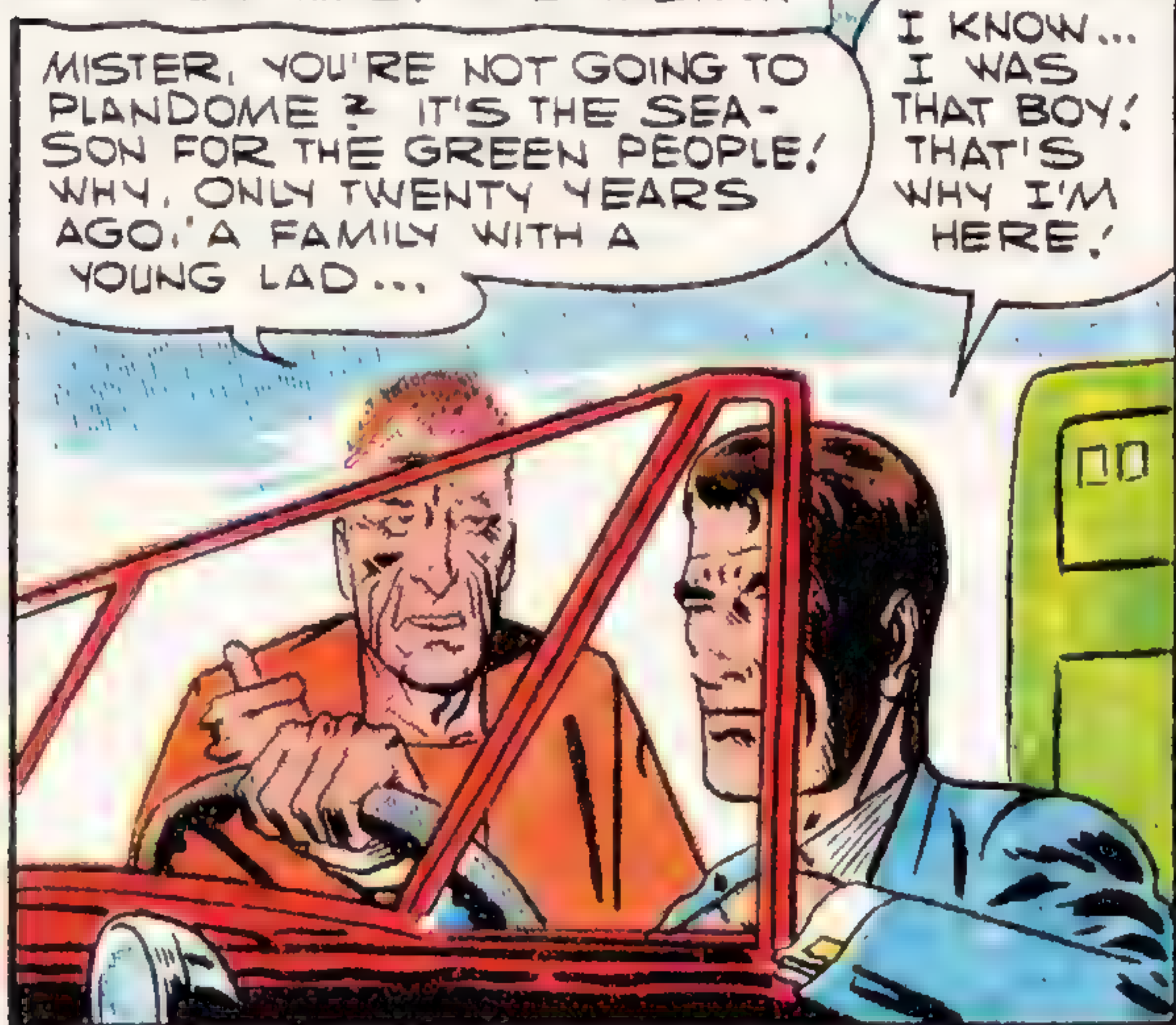
WHY... WHAT'S THIS? "THE GREEN PEOPLE WHO EVERY TWENTY YEARS FROM THE OUTER WORLD DO COME TO DRAW MORTALS..." GREAT HEAVENS... I'VE FOUND IT!

DEVOURING EVERY WORD, I COMMITTED THE TEXT TO MEMORY...

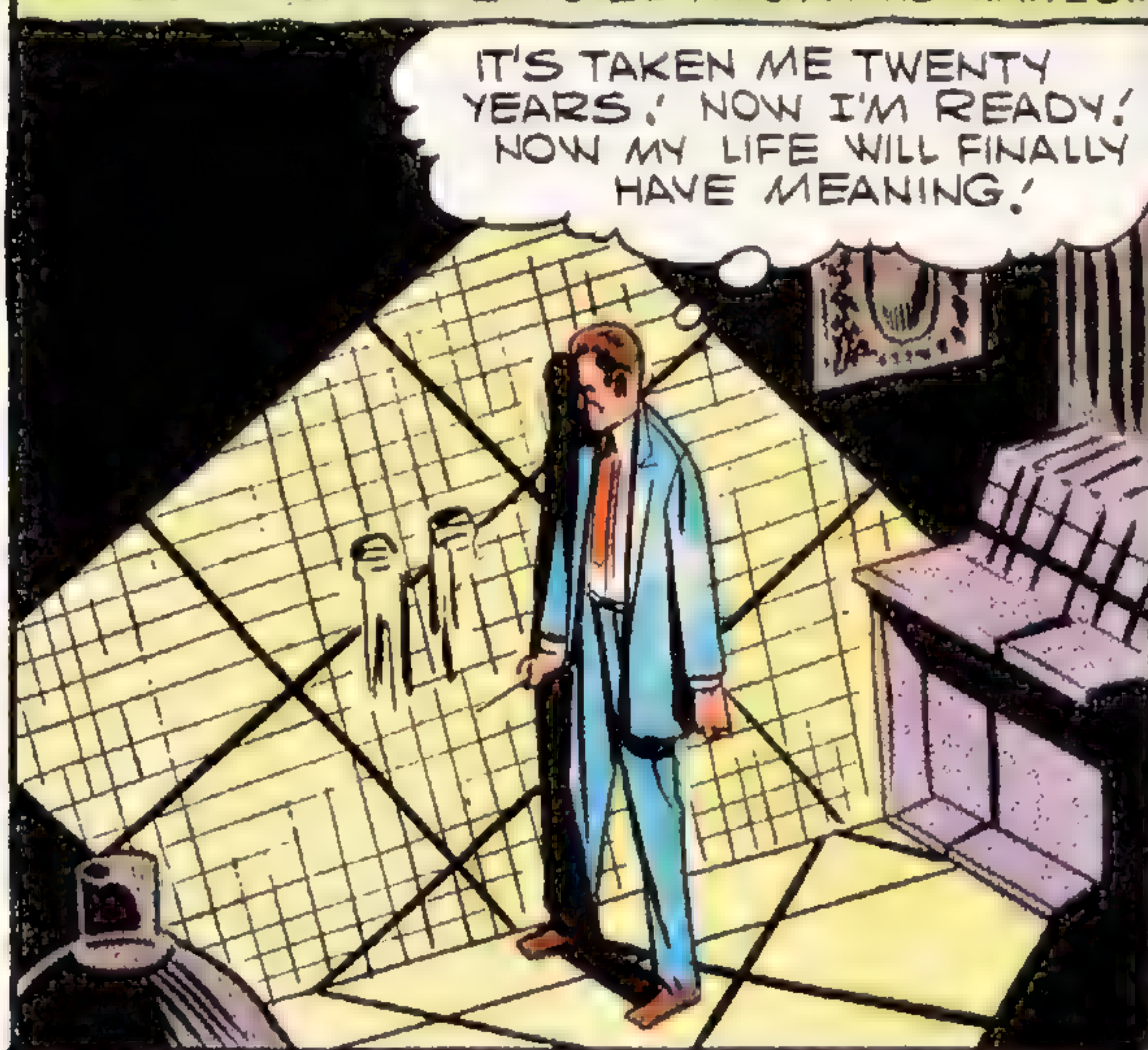


"... NOW I KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM IF THEY TRY TO TAKE ME!"

.... MY MIND MADE UP ; I WAITED FOR THE PRECISE TIME, AND THEN ...



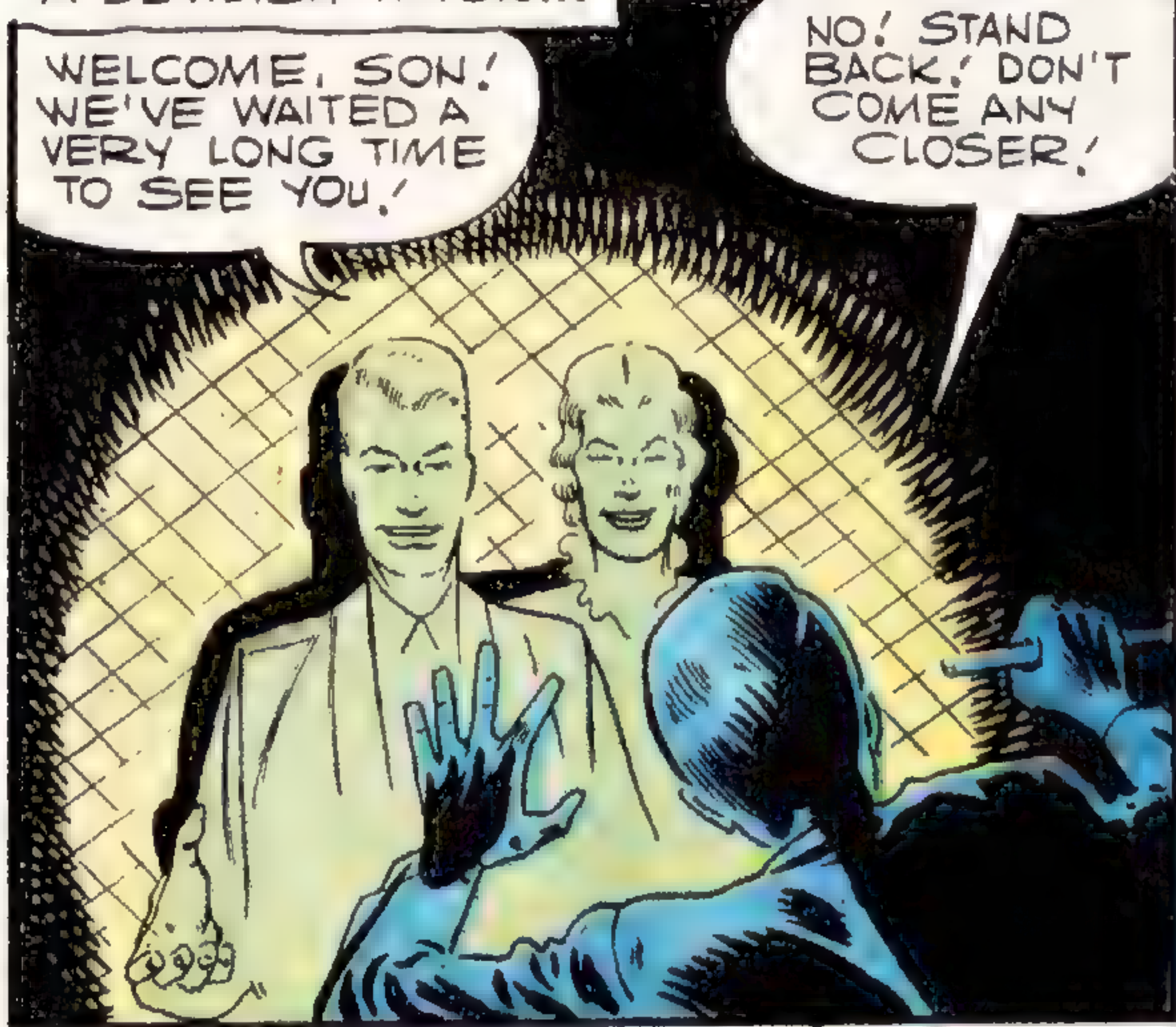
I TOOK THE SAME HOTEL ROOM AND WAITED..



I PRAY, I CURSE, I ALMOST GIVE UP HOPE. THEN SUDDENLY THE FIRST APPARITION APPEARS...

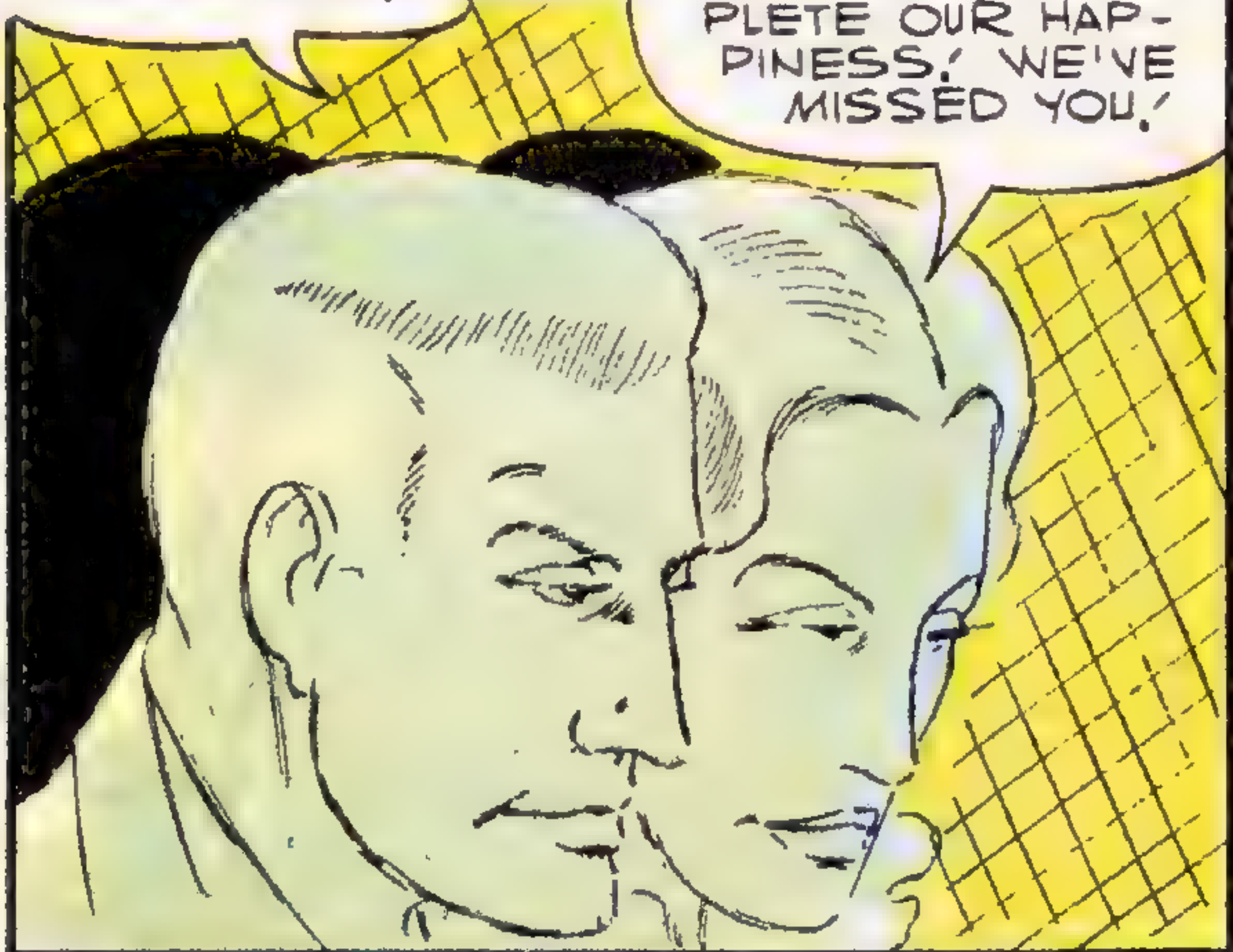


HOW CAN I BELIEVE IT ? NO--IT MUST BE A DEVILISH TRICK...

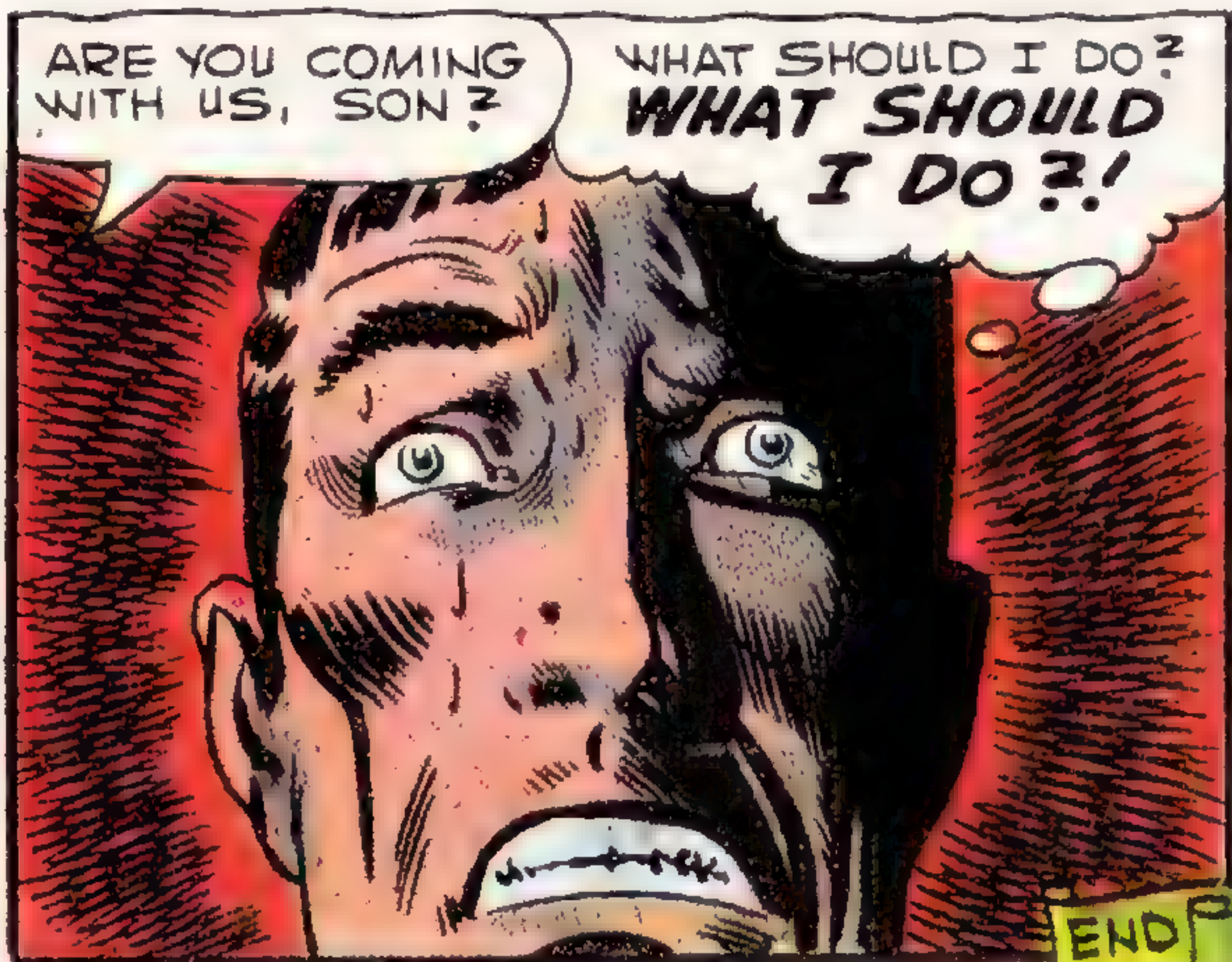


WE'RE HAPPY IN OUR OWN WORLD, SON! IT'S A VERY PLEASANT LIFE AND WE NEVER GROW OLD!

YES, THAT'S WHY WE'VE COME BACK... TO TAKE YOU WITH US! THAT WOULD COMPLETE OUR HAPPINESS! WE'VE MISSED YOU!



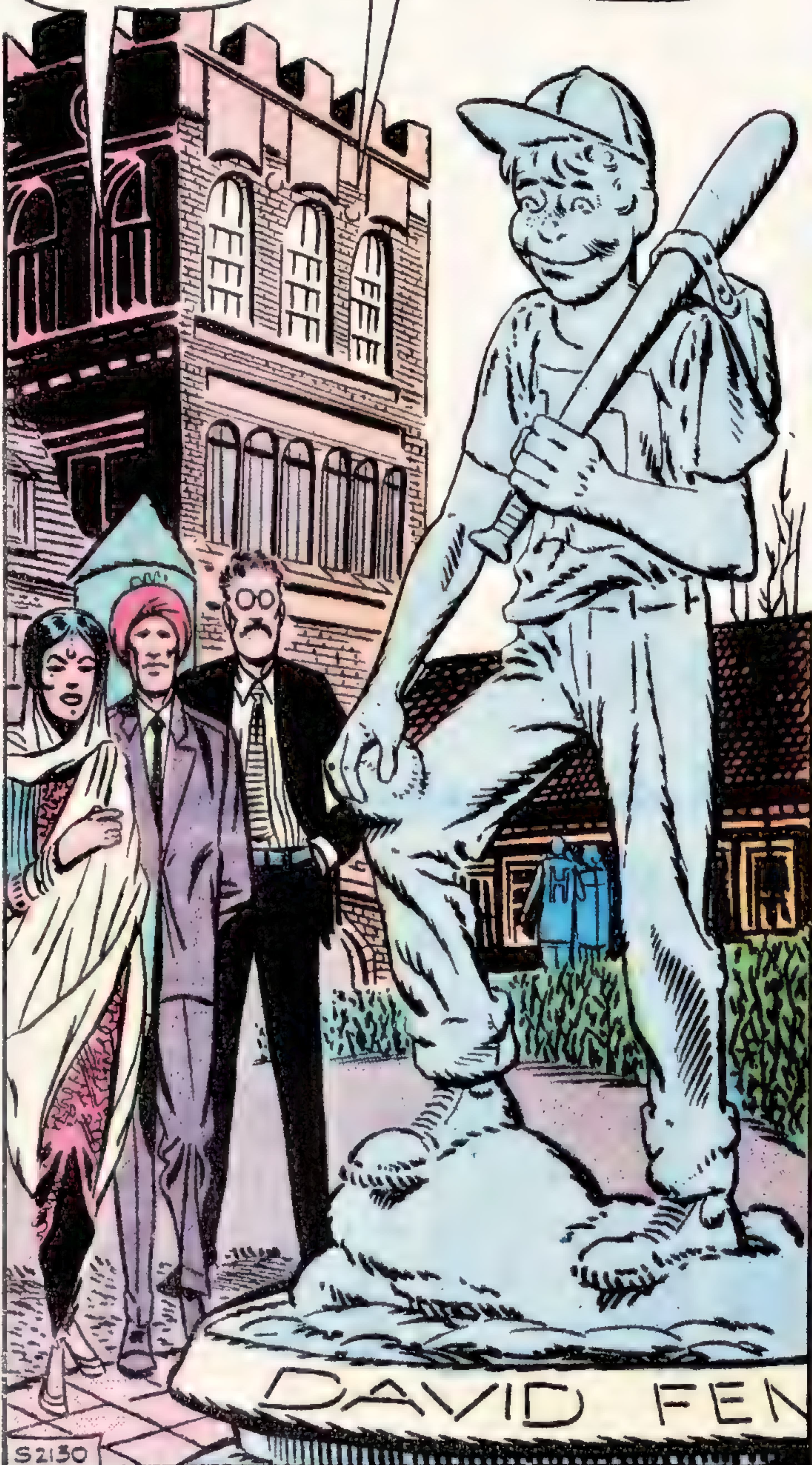
HAL, TORN BETWEEN A MYSTERIOUS NEW WORLD WITH HIS PARENTS AND HIS DESIRE TO REMAIN ON EARTH, STANDS UNDECIDED



CLAIRVOYANCE

MOST UNUSUAL! A STATUE OF A BOY ON YOUR CAMPUS! I THOUGHT ONLY COLLEGE PRESIDENTS AND WAR HEROES RATED THIS HONOR!

DAVID FENNER WAS A MOST UNUSUAL BOY... A CLAIRVOYANT... WHOSE MIND DID MORE FOR OUR UNIVERSITY AND COUNTRY THAN ANY SIX PRESIDENTS! BUT LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT HIM...



DAVID WAS AN ORDINARY BOY WHO WOULD RATHER PLAY BASEBALL THAN EAT...

GOING... GOING! IT'S A HOMER!

OH... HECK!

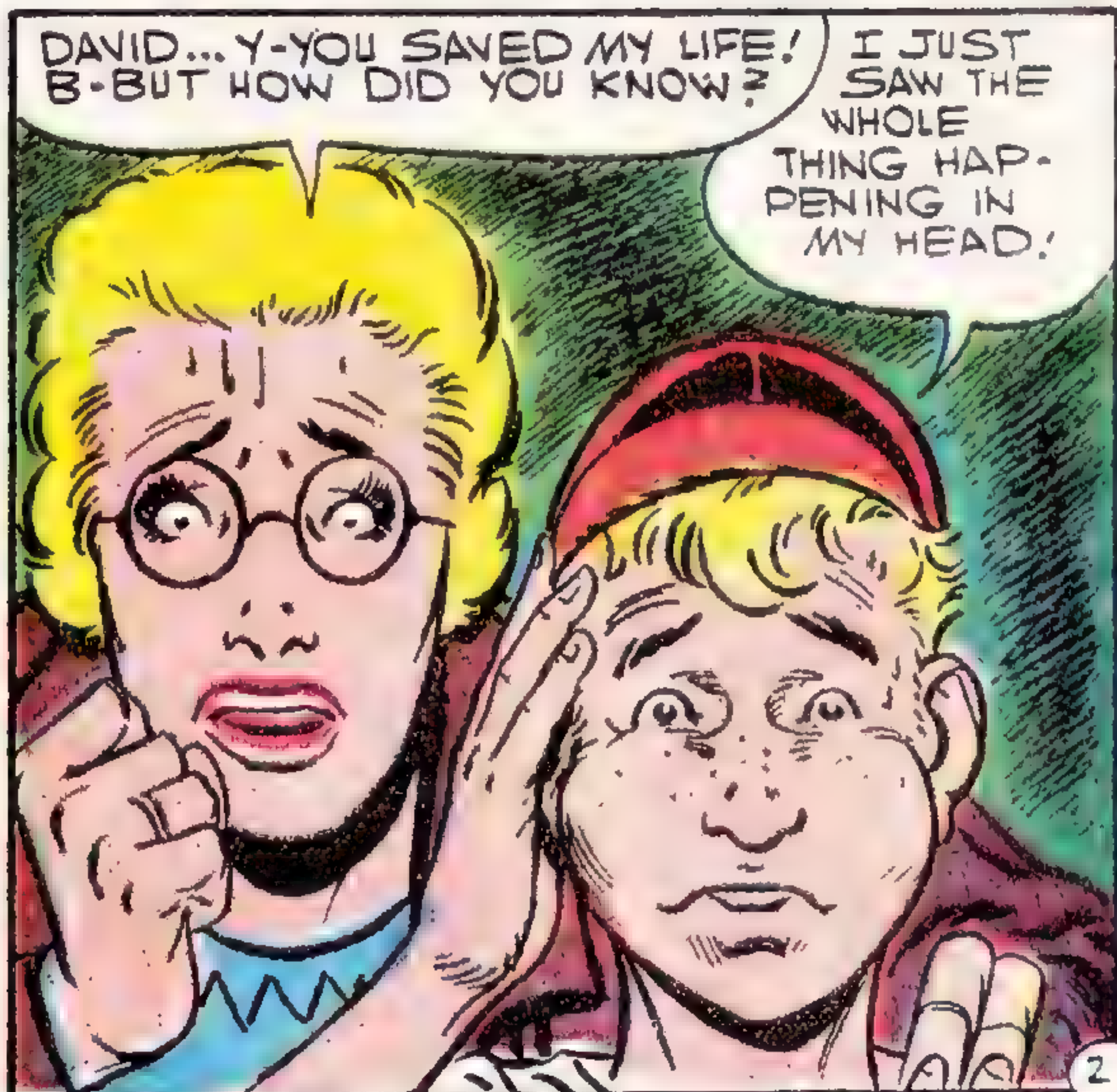
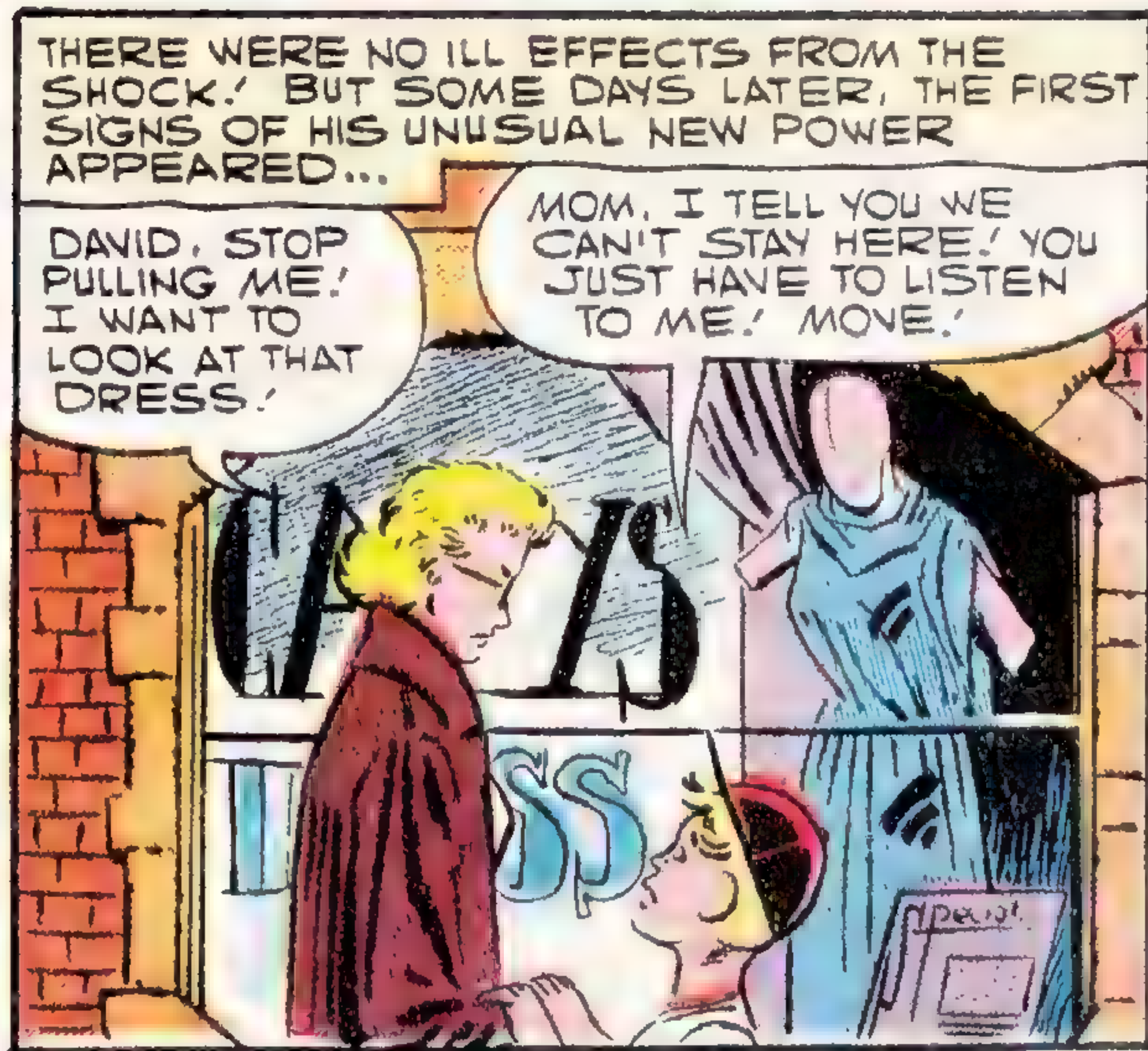
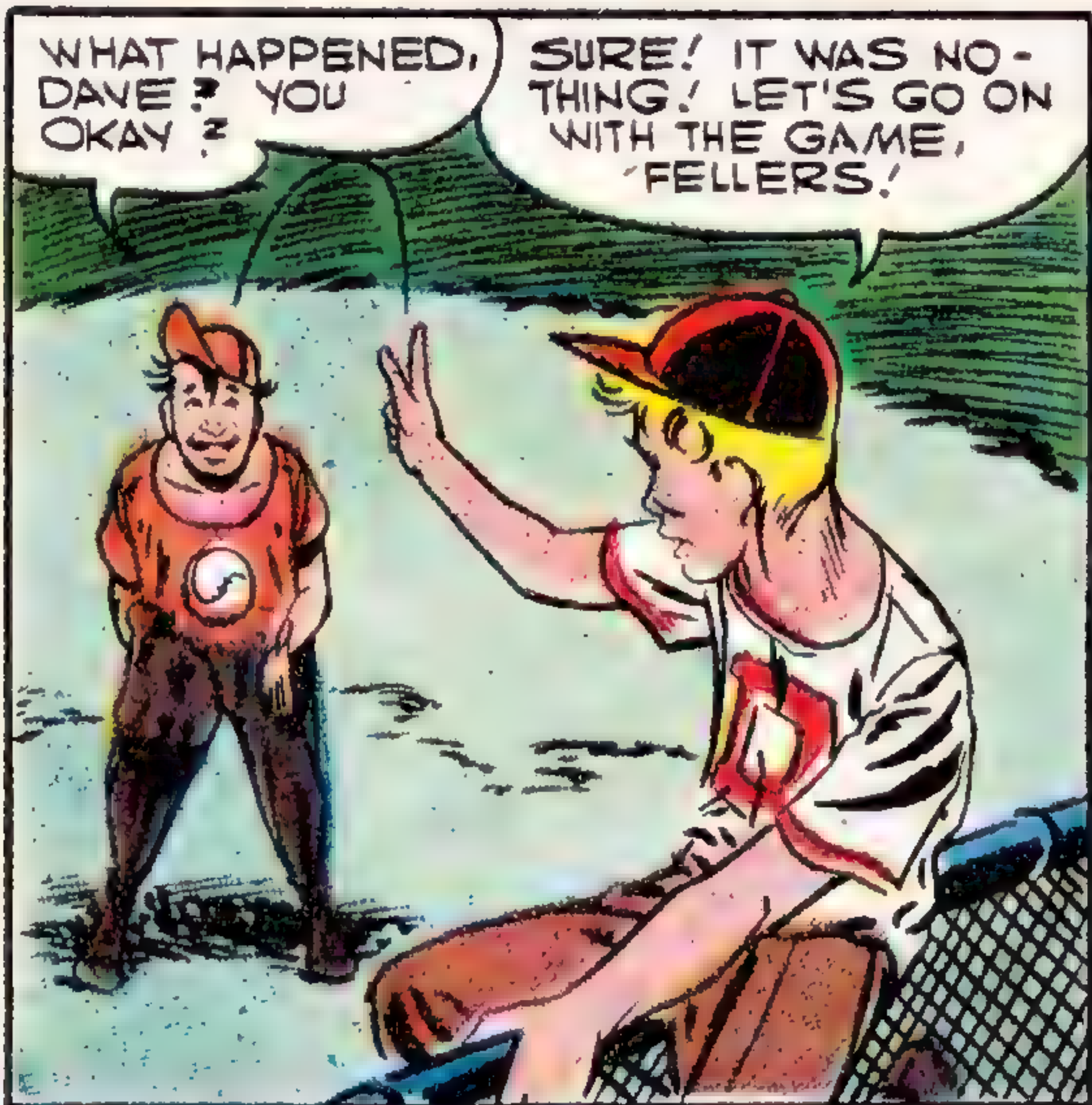
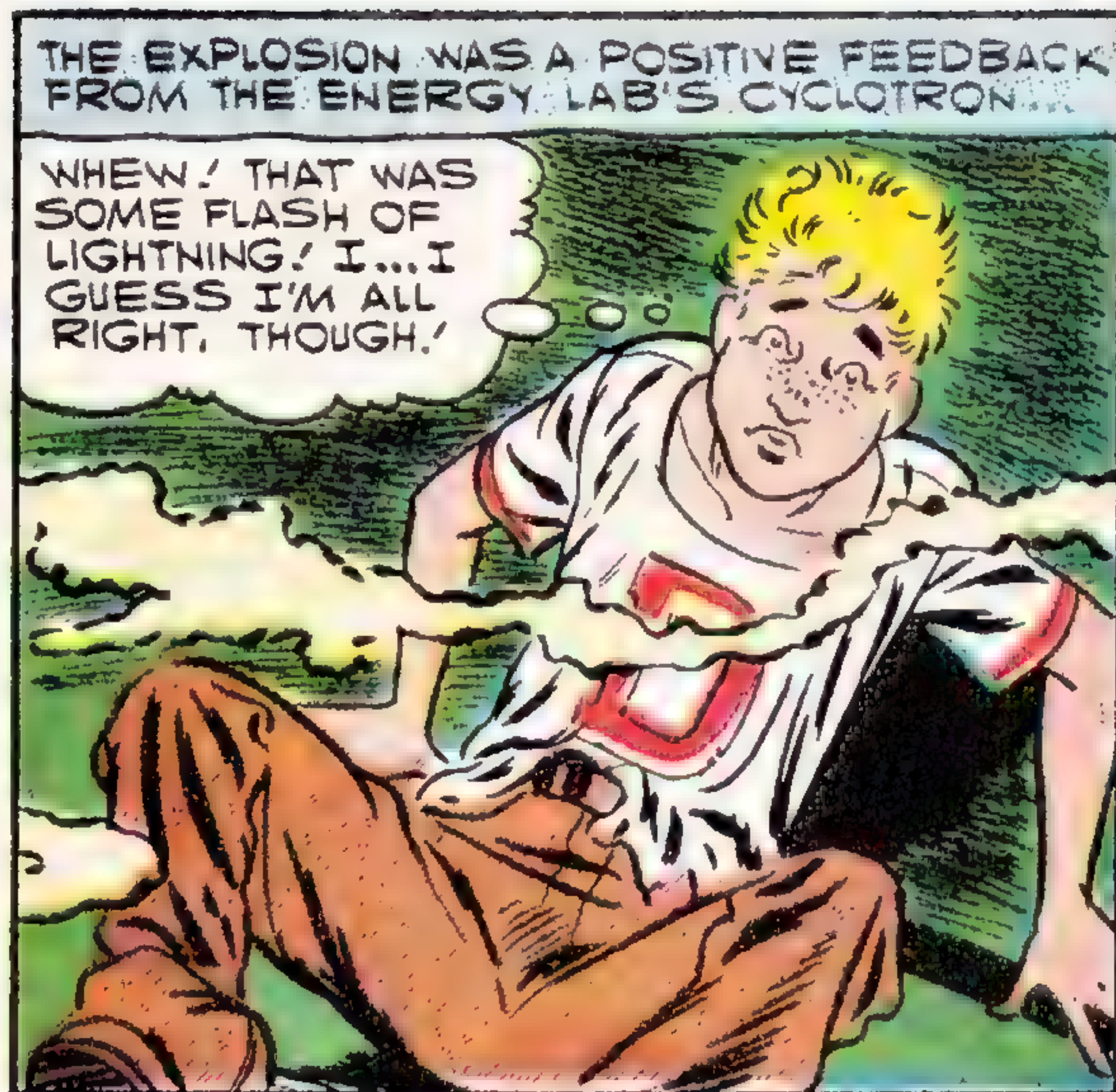
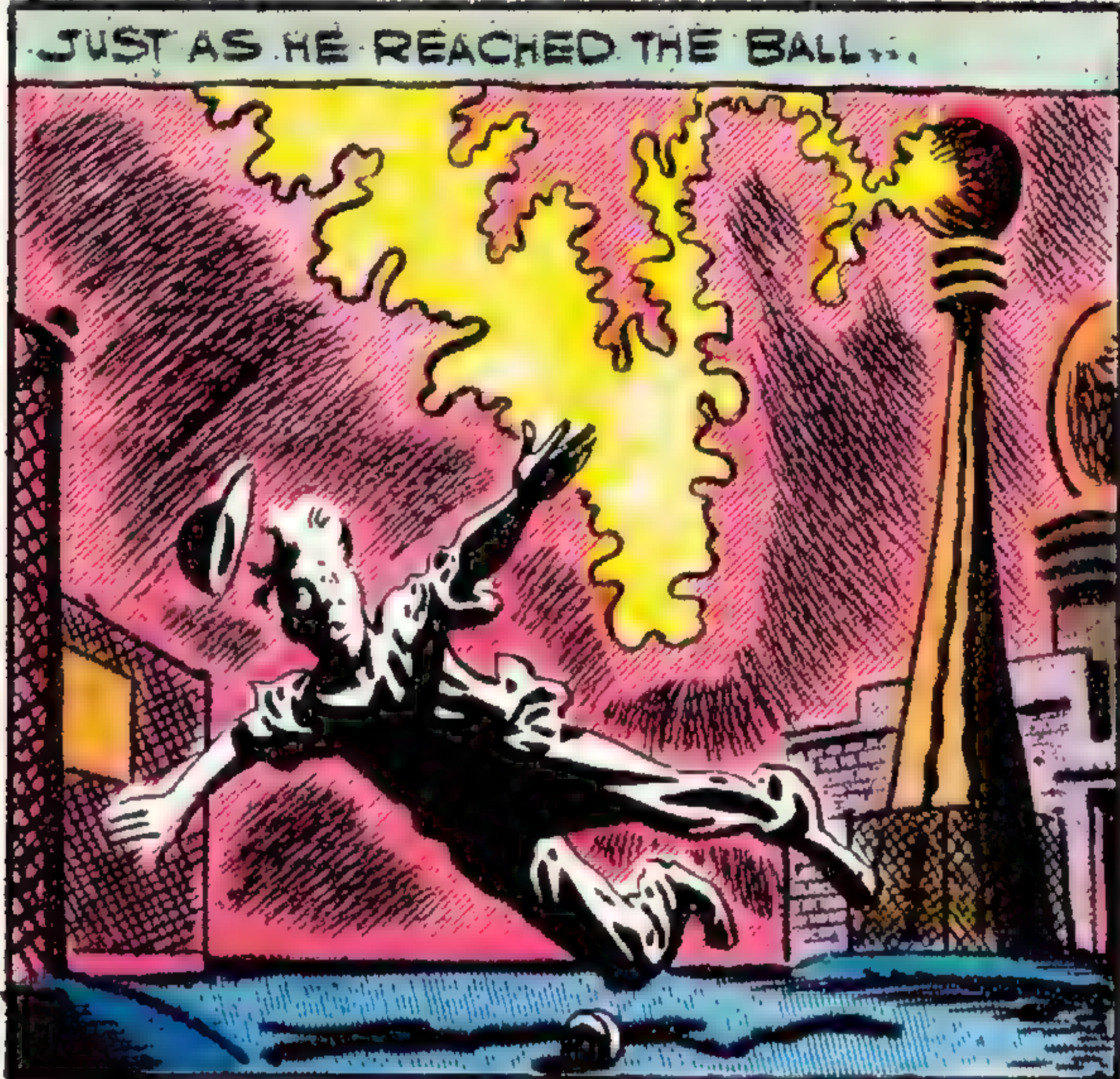


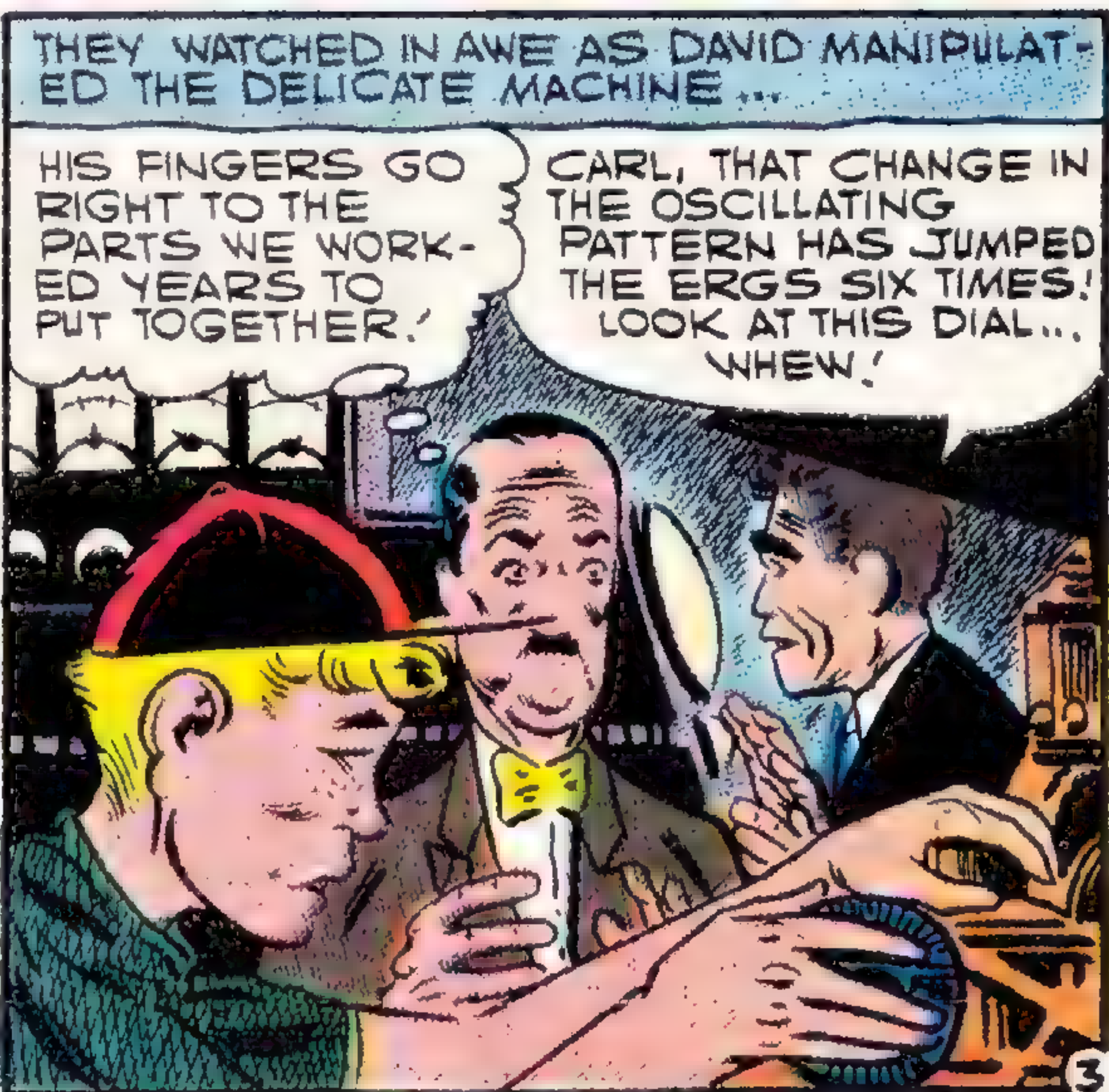
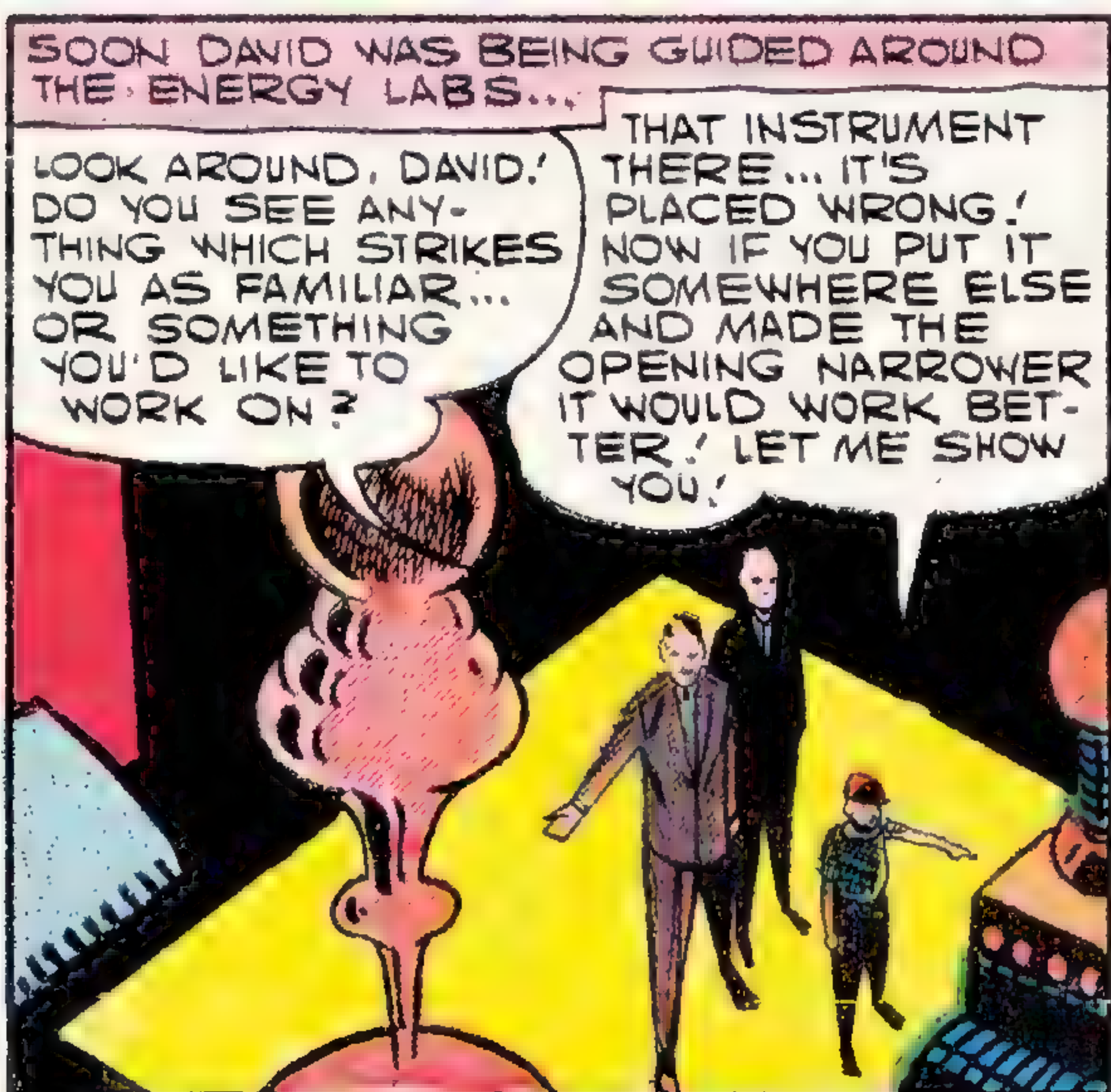
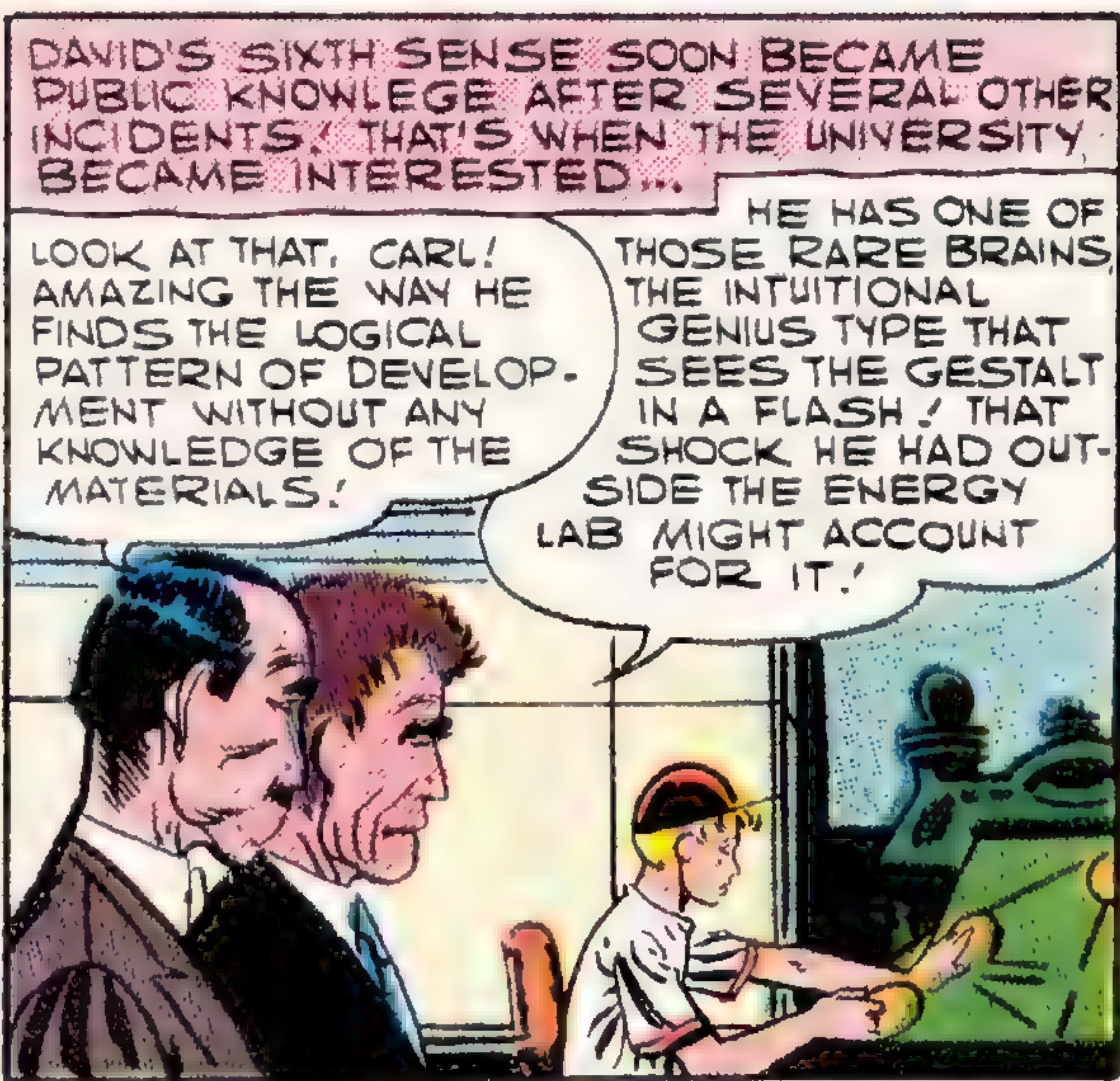
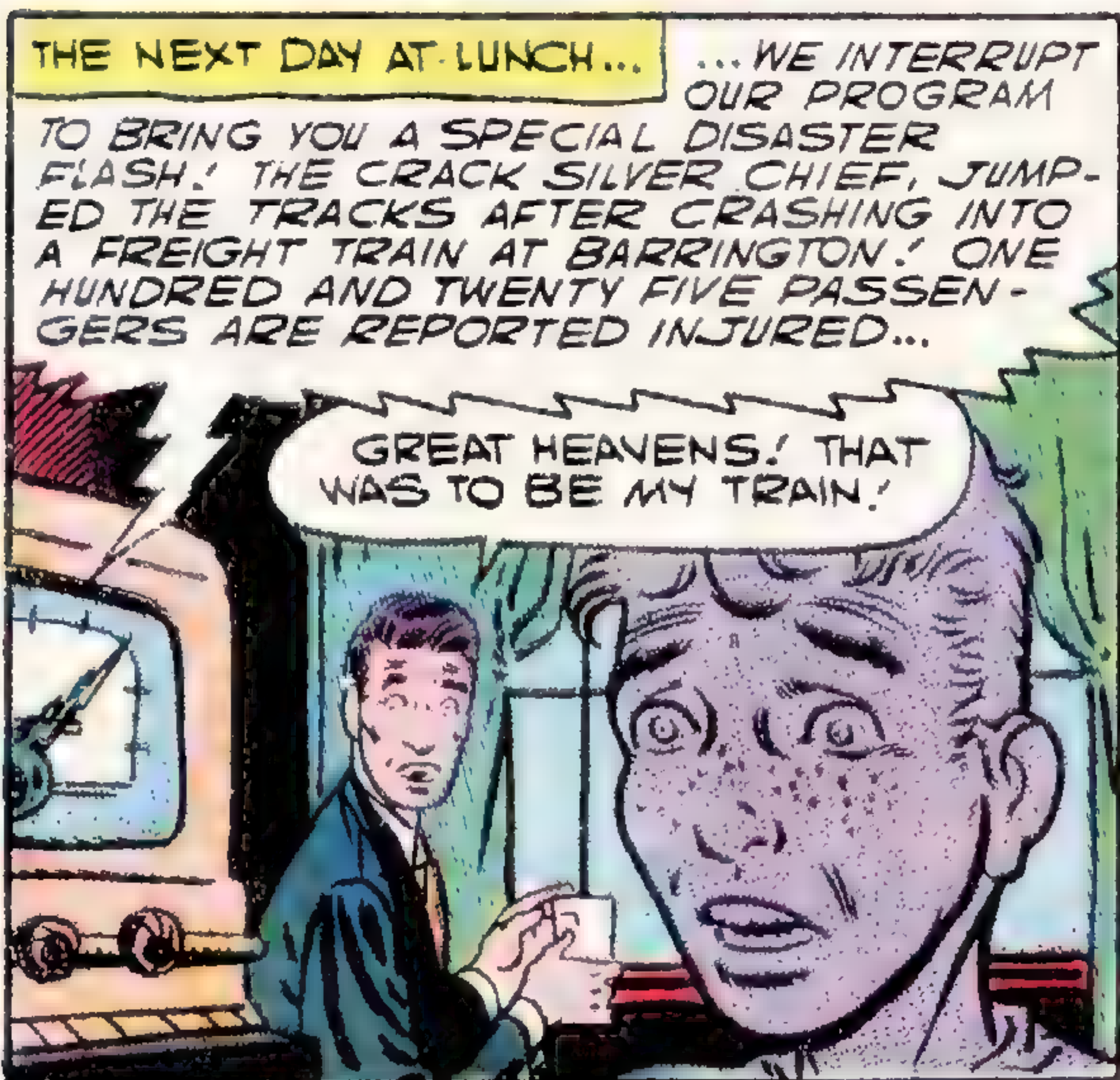
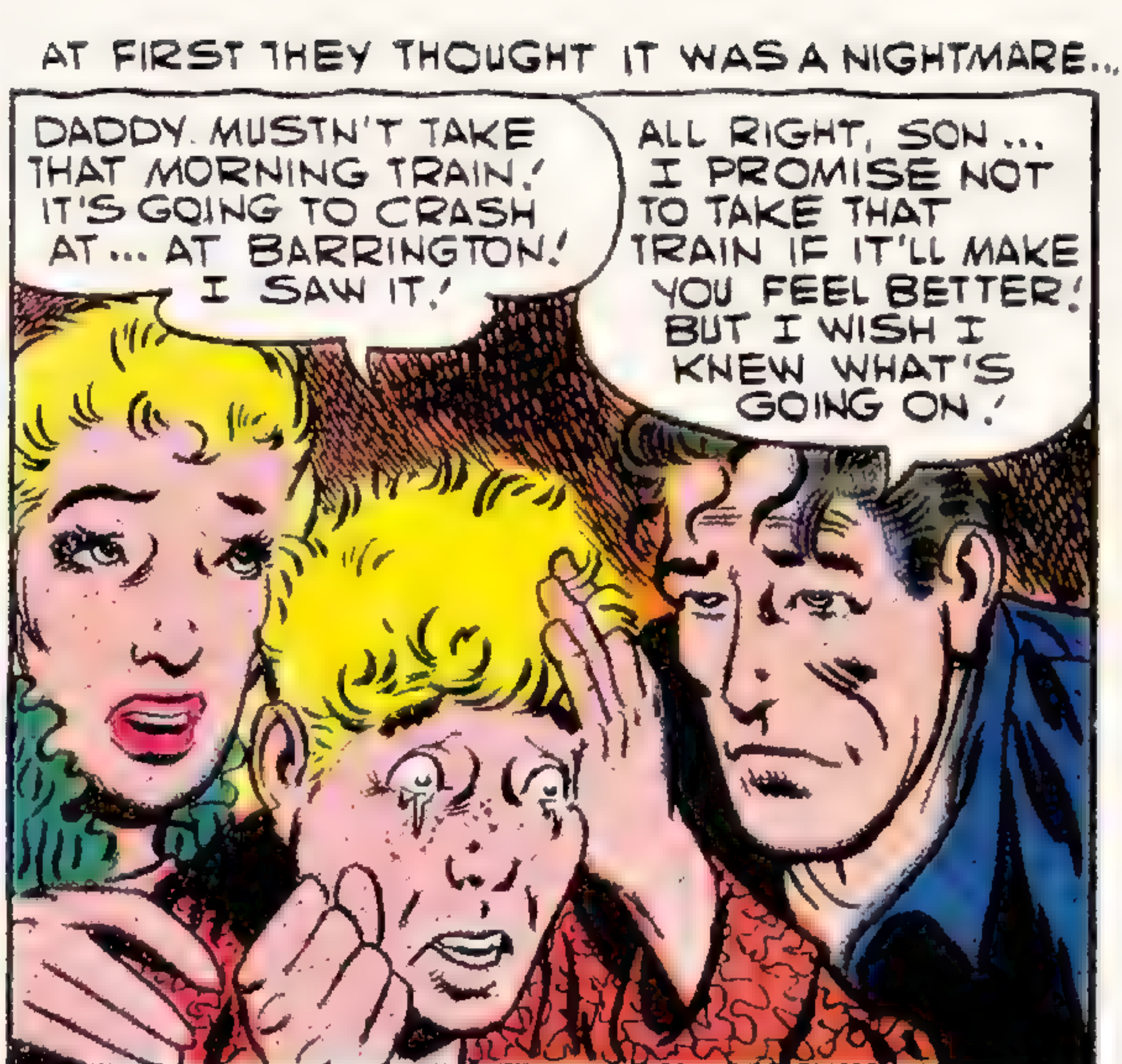
HEY, DAVE... THAT SIGN SAYS IT'S DANGEROUS! MAYBE YOU SHOULDN'T GO AFTER THE BALL?

DON'T WORRY! I'LL BE CAREFUL!



Steve Ditko





DAVID BECAME THE GUIDING GENIUS FOR THE SCHOOL OF EXPERIMENTAL PHYSICAL STUDIES...

THIS FORMULA... HAS TO LEAD TO THIS! I CAN'T EXPLAIN WHY... I JUST FEEL IT!

AMAZING!

THE WINGS MUST BE BROUGHT BACK TO BALANCE THE JET THRUST!

IT'S LOGICAL, BUT WE DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW YOU ARRIVE AT IT!

WITH THIS NEW ALLOY, THE SATELLITE WON'T MELT IN THE ATMOSPHERE!

THEN WE CAN FINALLY LAUNCH THE SATELLITE!

AFTER A YEAR OF INTENSIVE, HIGH LEVEL WORK, DAVID SUDDENLY FELL ILL...

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH ME, DOCTOR BROWN?

NOTHING ORGANIC... BUT I DON'T THINK YOU CAN RETURN TO THE UNIVERSITY JUST YET!

WHAT CAN WE DO, DOCTOR?

THE ONLY MEDICINE IS REST AND RELAXATION! HE'S BEEN WORKING TOO HARD WITHOUT PLAY! DON'T FORGET, HE MAY HAVE THE BRAIN OF A GENIUS, BUT HE'S STILL A CHILD!

WORK CEASED FOR DAVID! HE BECAME A NORMAL TEN YEAR OLD AGAIN -- THAT IS, HE TRIED...

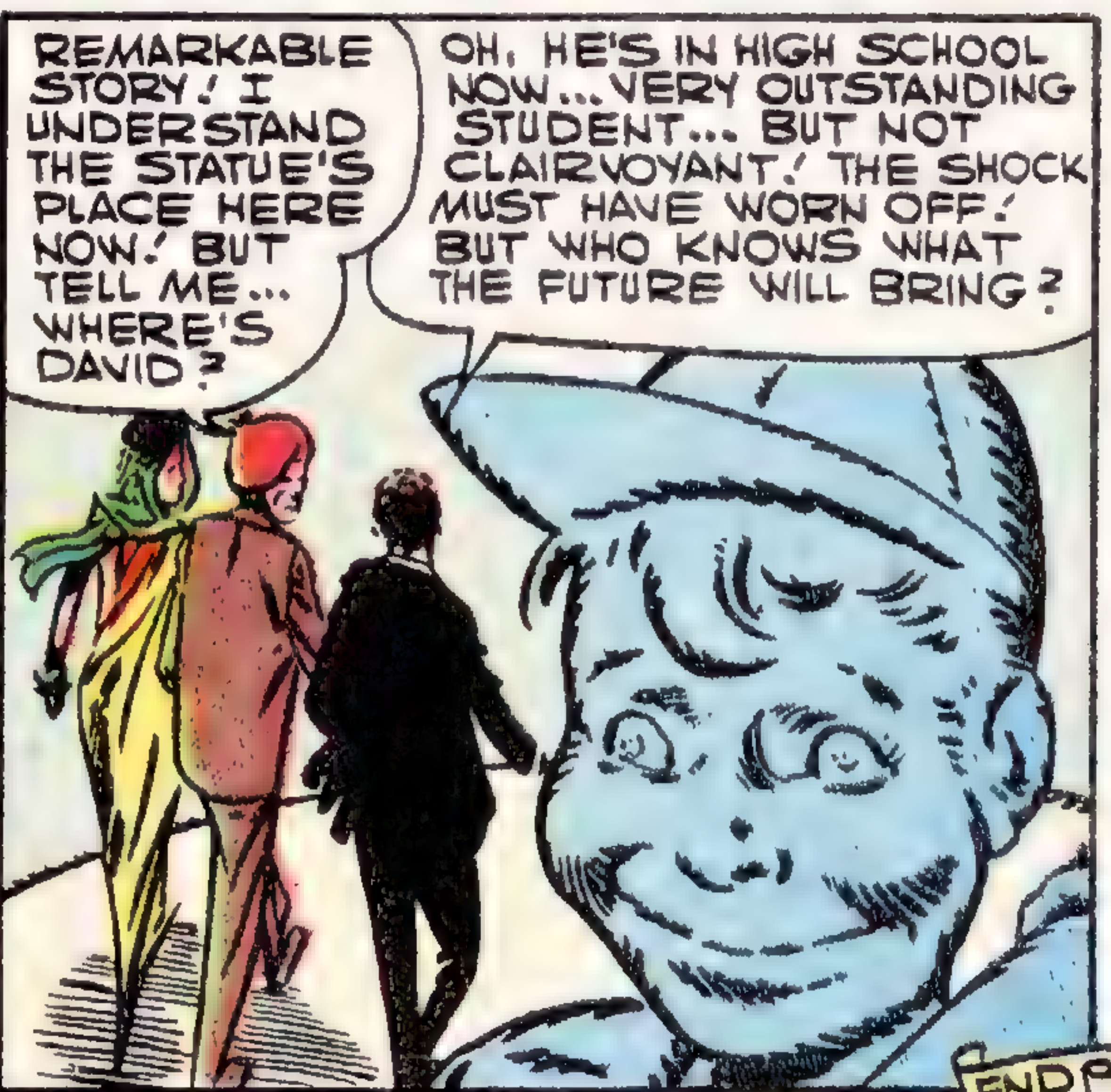
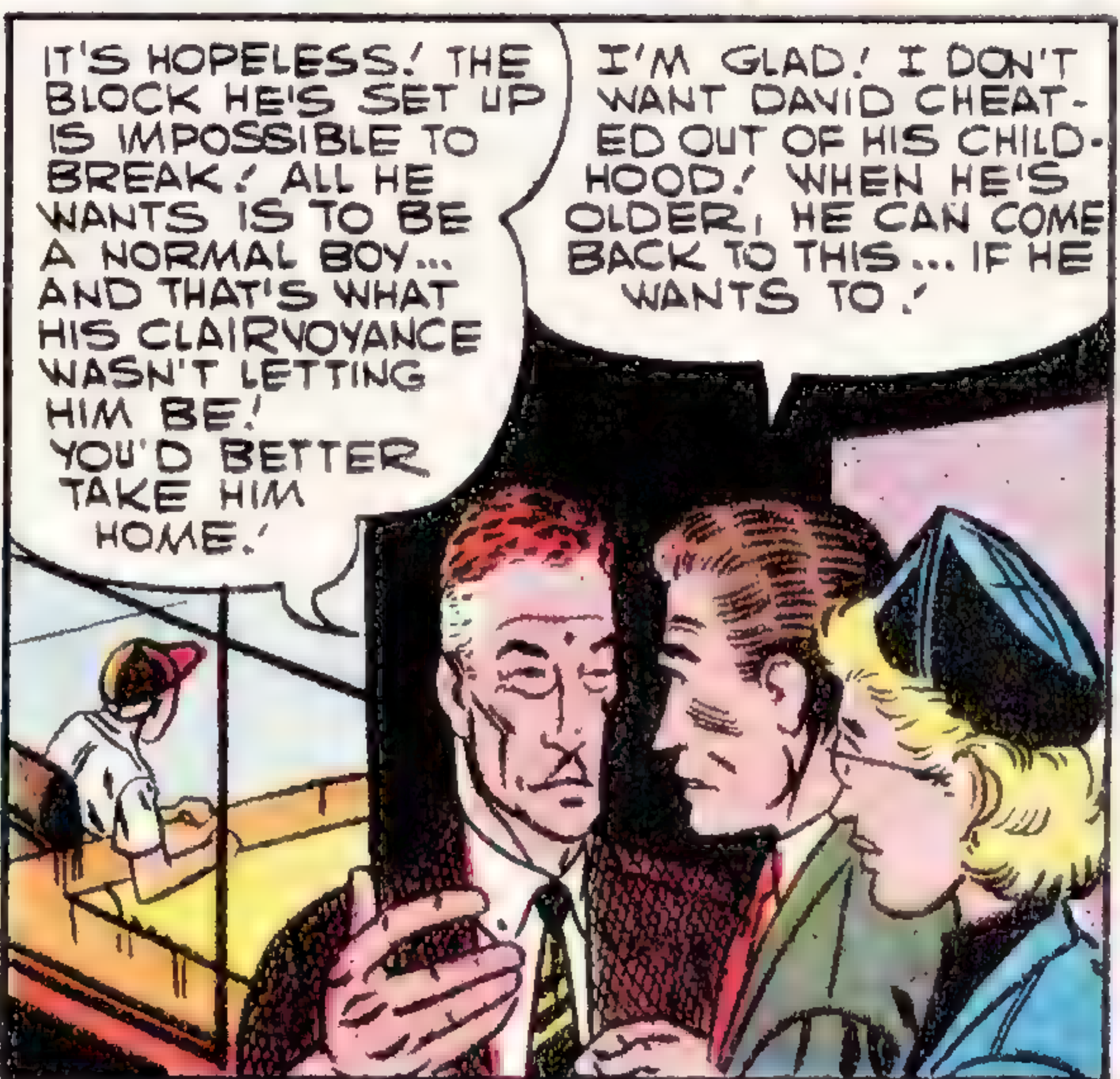
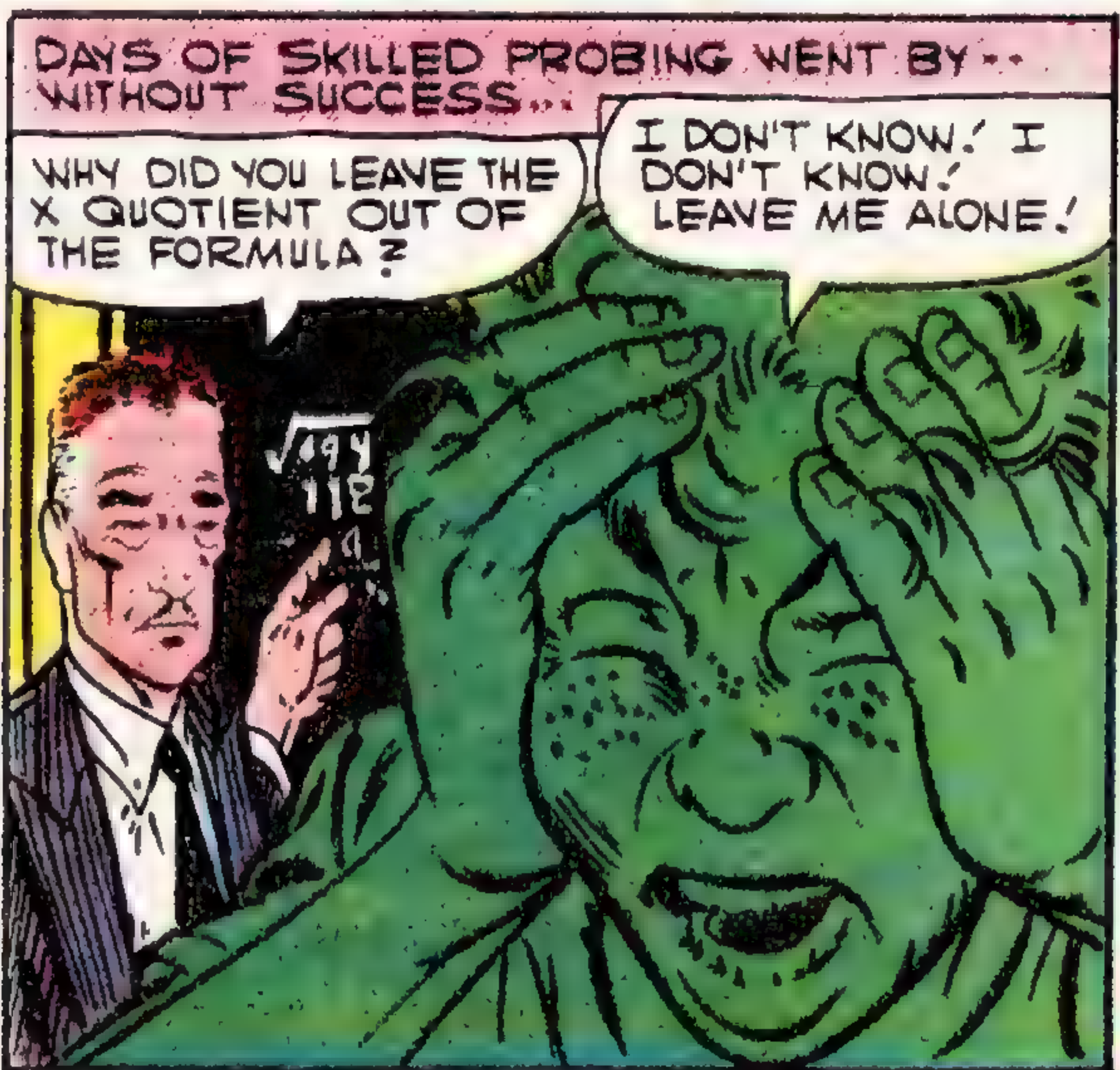
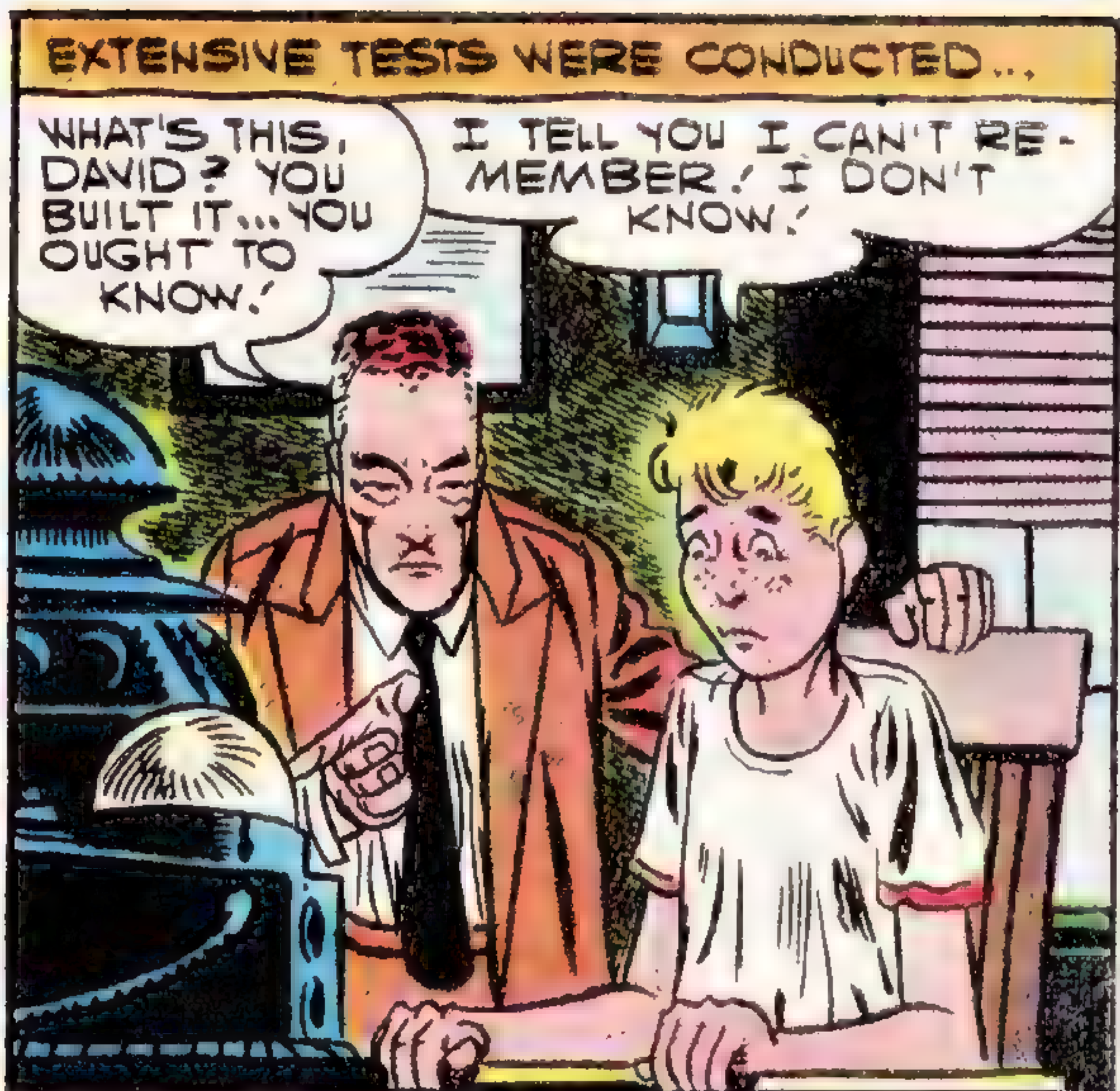
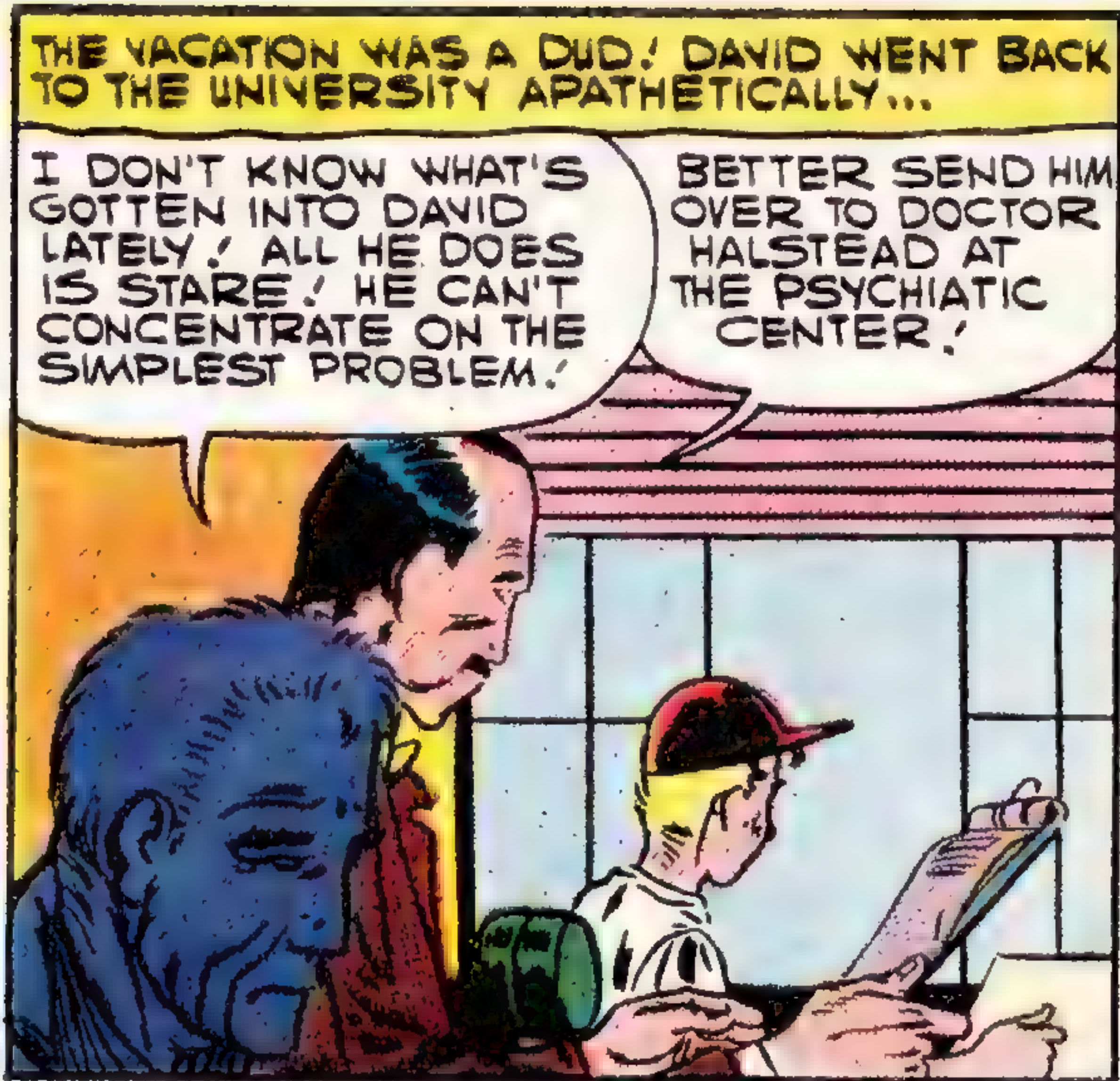
HEY, FELLERS! HOW ABOUT CHOOSING ME IN A GAME?

AWW, GO PEDDLE YOUR SPACESHIP! GO AWAY... YOU'RE ALL HOPPED UP WITH THAT YOURANIUM!

GO BACK TO YOUR LAB, PROFESSOR!

LOOK WHO WANTS TO PLAY BALL!

HEY, HAVE YOU FIGURED WHO'S GOING TO WIN THE SERIES ON MARS?



The C A R

S Ditko



IN THE EXECUTIVE OFFICES OF WILLIAM B. GAINES, PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL CEMENT...

FOR PITY'S SAKE, GAINES, GIVE ME A BREAK! I'LL TRY TO RAISE THE MONEY IN A WEEK! I DIDN'T KNOW OUR STOCK SANK THAT LOW!

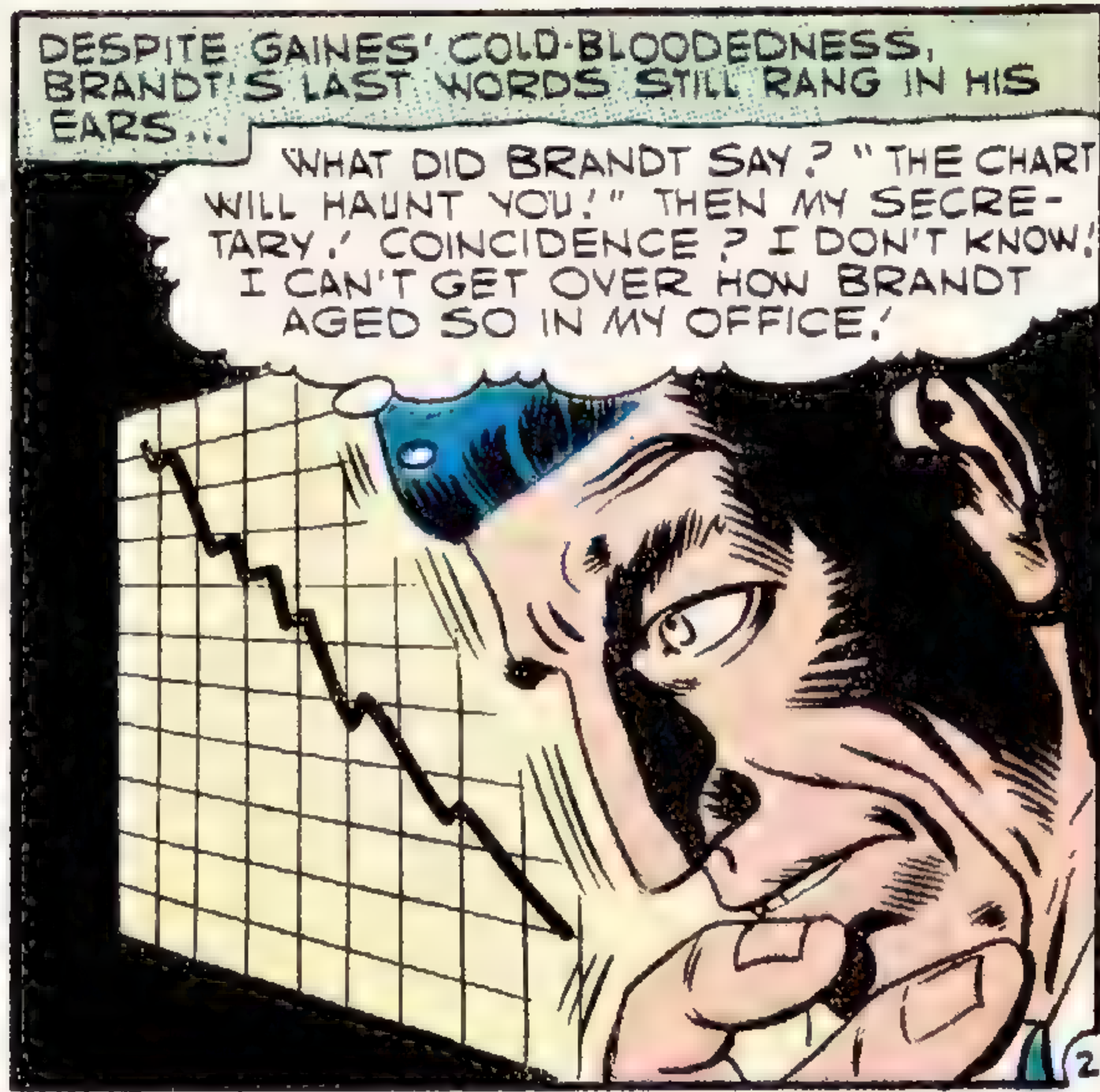
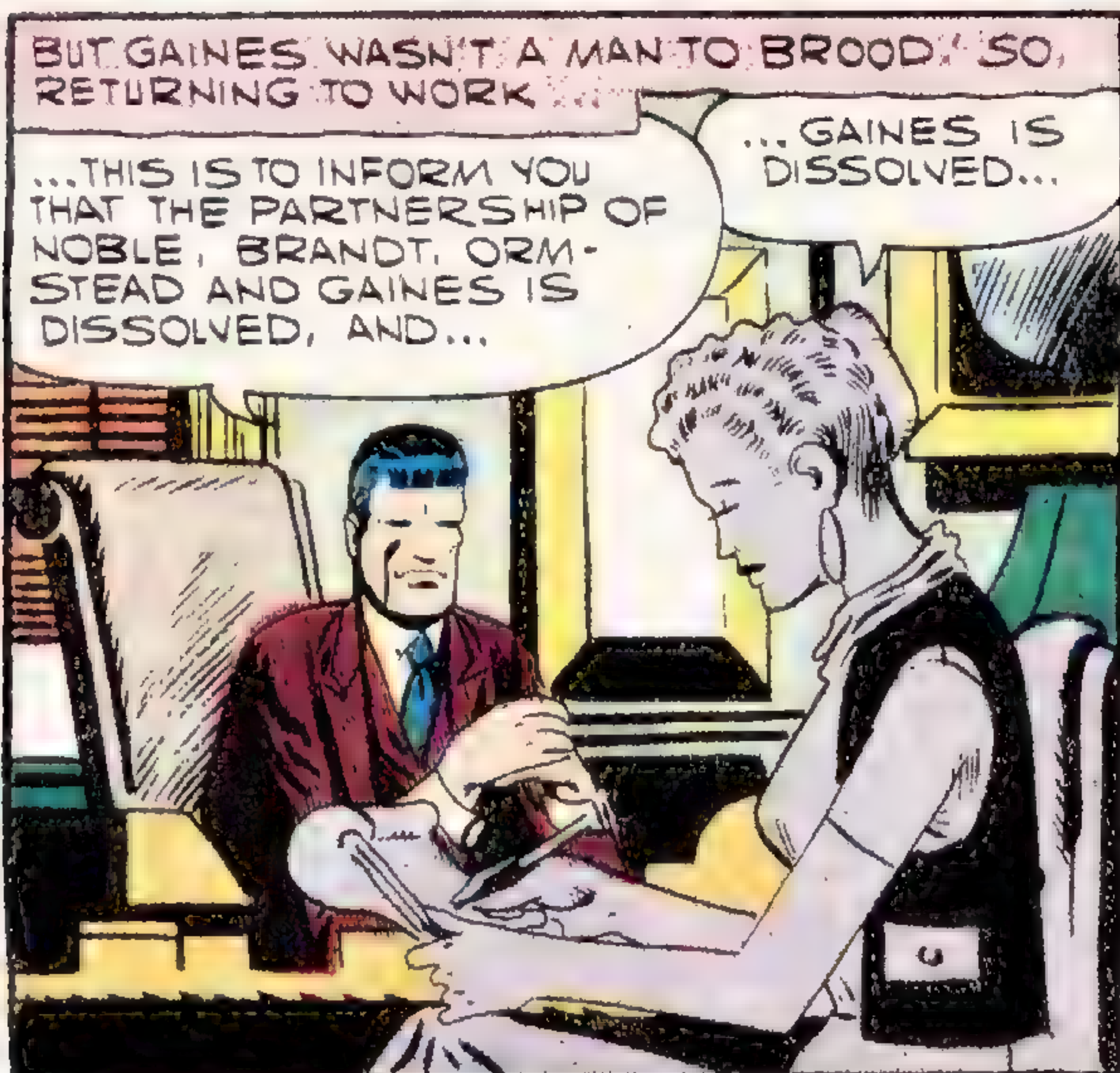
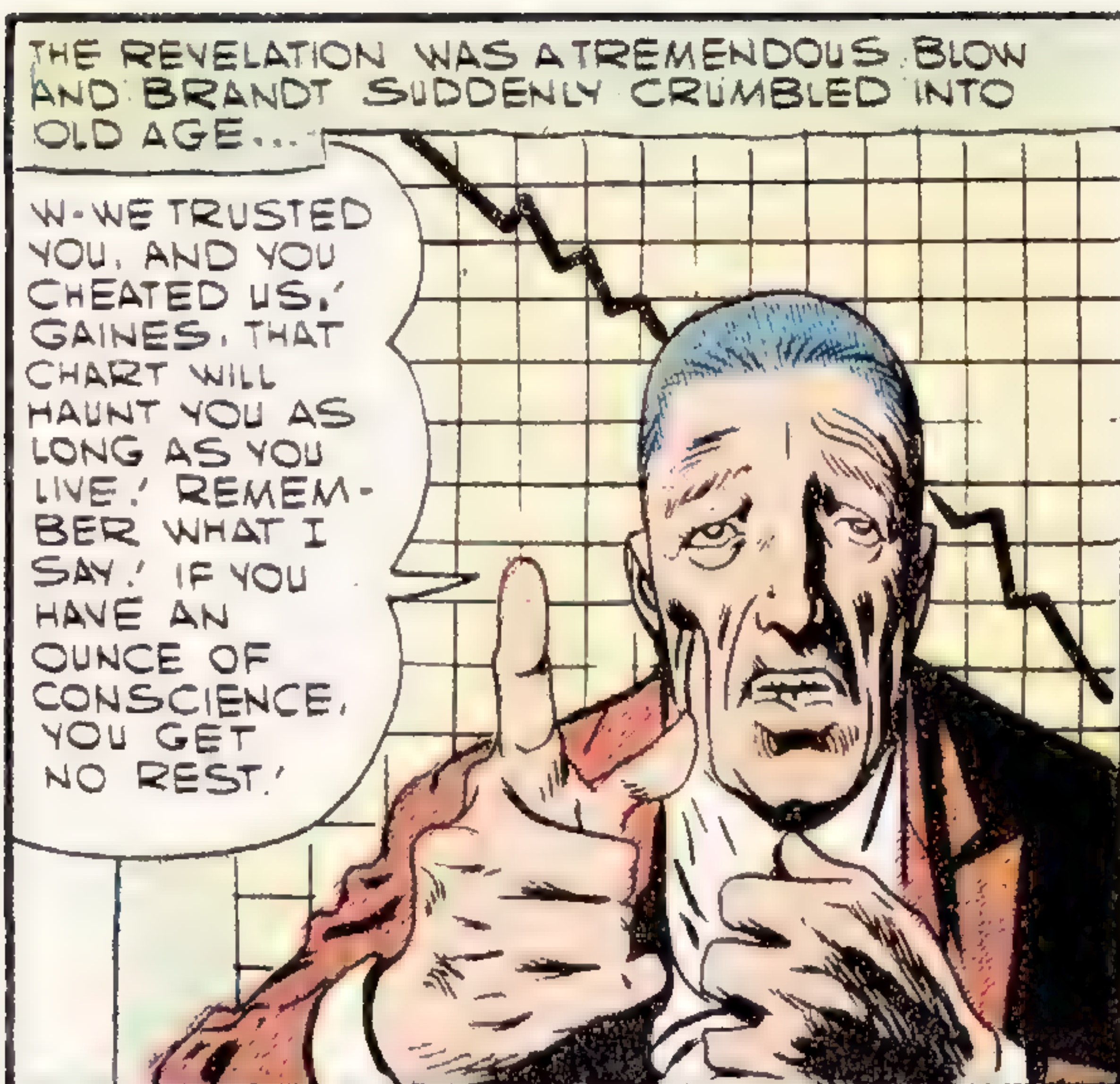
YOU'RE THROUGH, BRANDT! I TOOK OVER YOUR STOCK BEFORE IT HIT BOTTOM! I'M SOLE OWNER OF NATIONAL CEMENT!

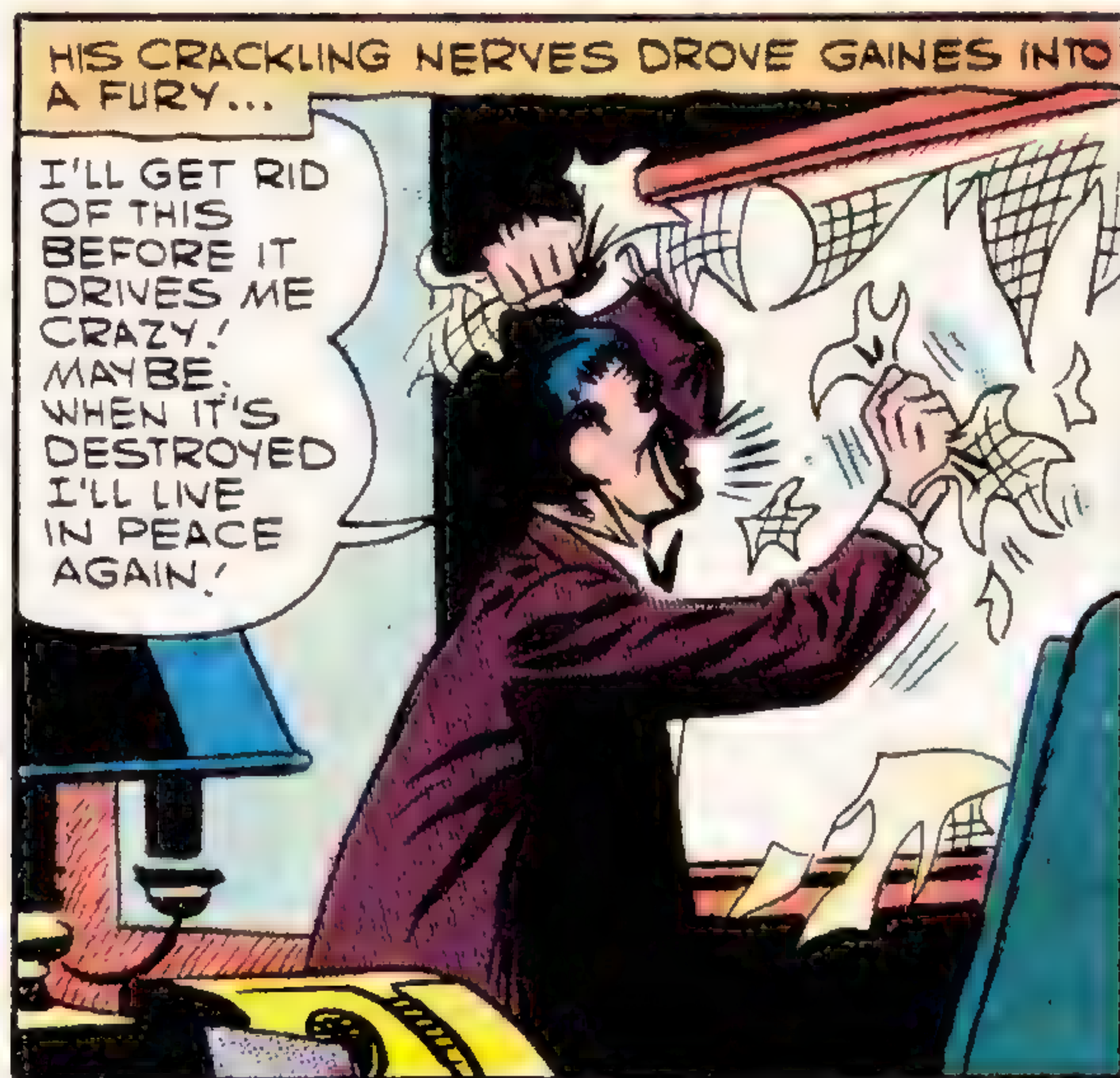
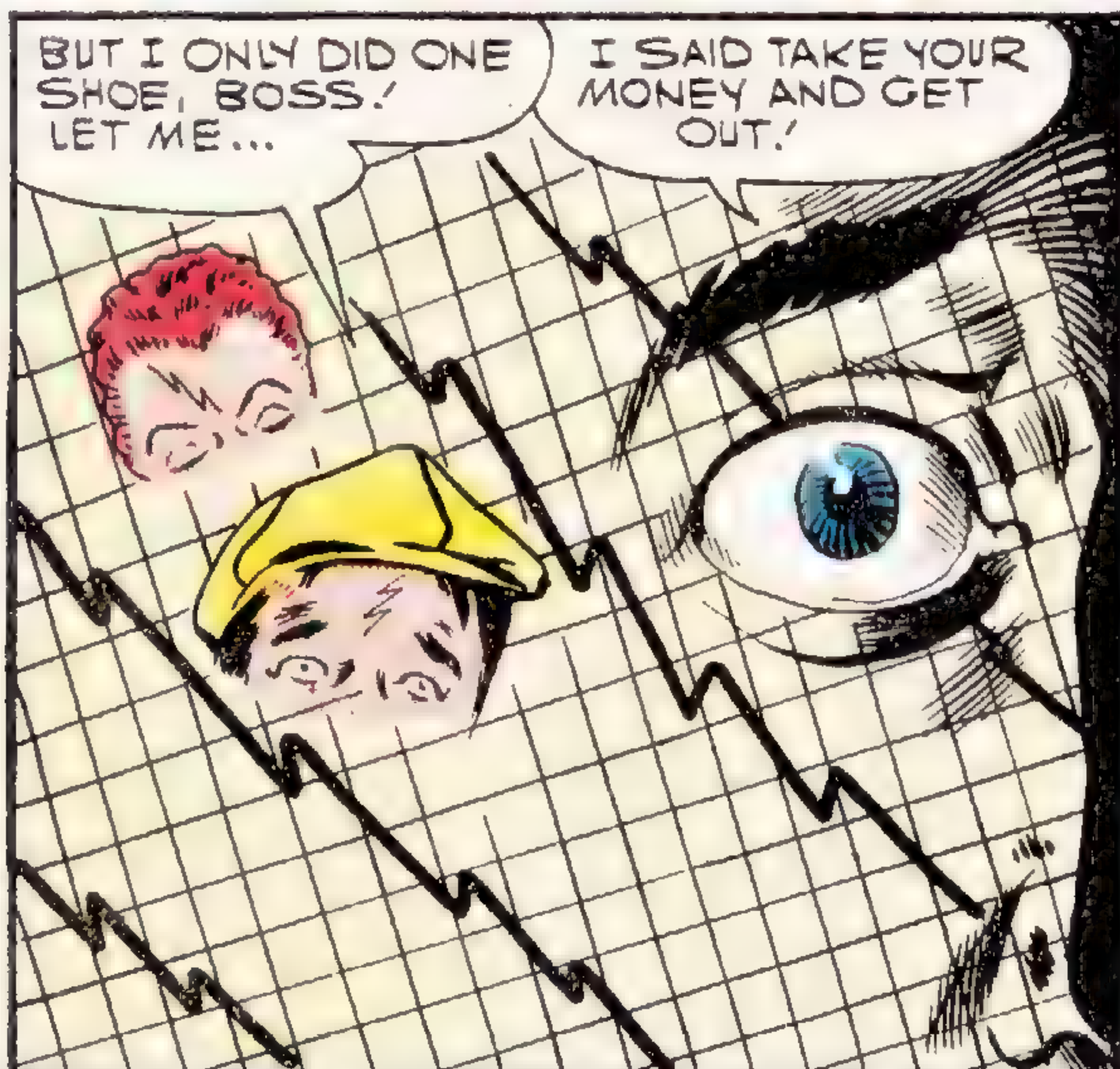
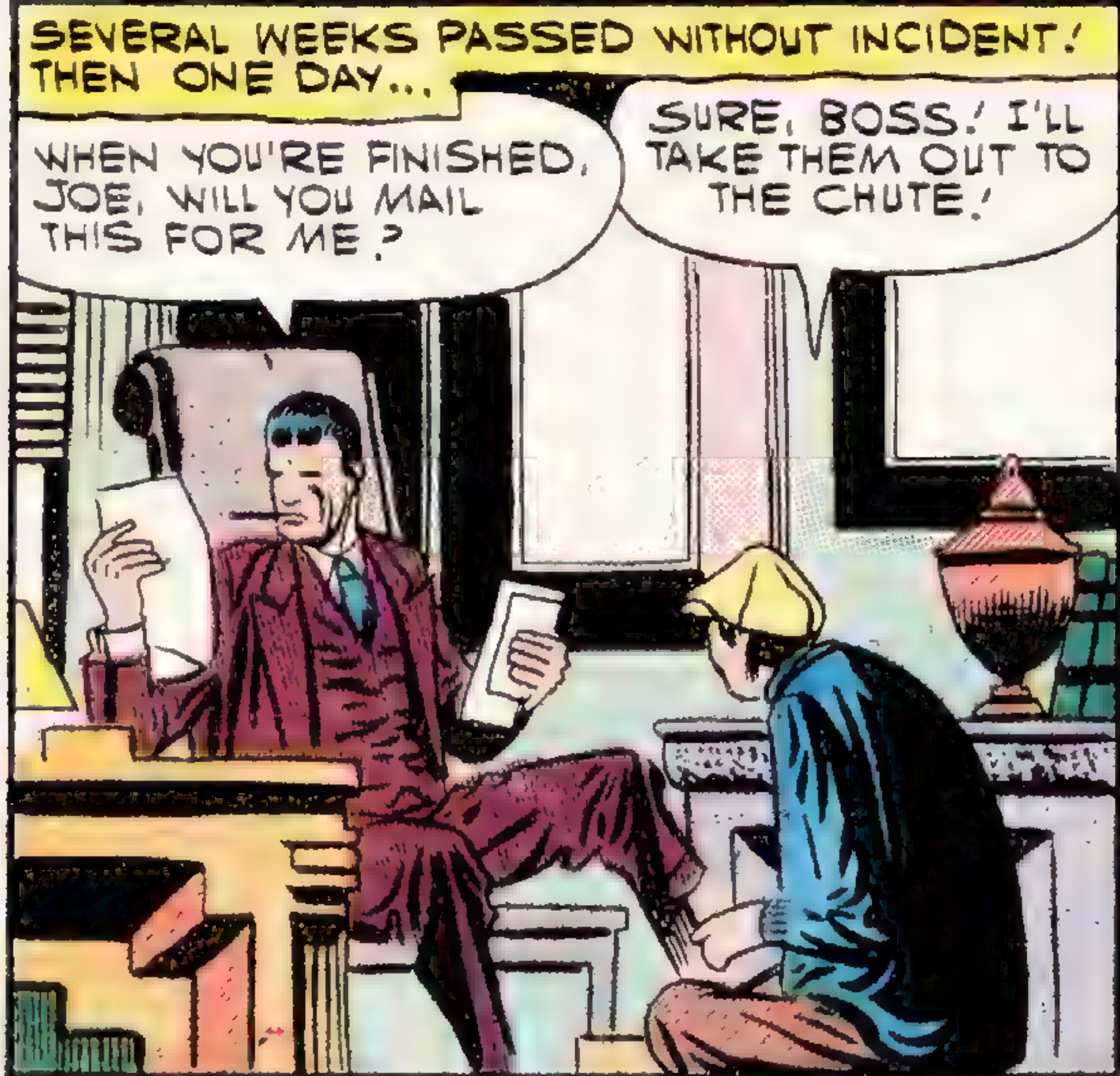
A scene from an office. A man in a brown suit (Gaines) is sitting at a desk, looking stressed. Another man in a red suit (Brandt) is standing and gesturing with his hands, looking angry. There are papers and a lamp on the desk.

THAT INDEX IS A LIE! YOU'VE RIGGED THOSE LOSSES TO FORCE ME OUT! JUST LIKE YOU DID TO NOBLE AND ORMSTEAD! YOU'VE RUINED US ALL. YOU CROOK!

SO WHAT IF I DID? YOU CAN'T PROVE A THING, CAN YOU?

A close-up of the two men. Brandt is in the foreground, looking intense and pointing his finger. Gaines is in the background, looking back at him.





BUT THERE WAS NO ESCAPE FROM THE OMNIPRESENT SCAR...



NERVES COMPLETELY UNSTRUNG
GAINES SOUGHT THE OPEN
AIR, BUT SUDDENLY...

HENRY BRANDT... WAIT A
MINUTE! HE DIDN'T
HEAR ME!

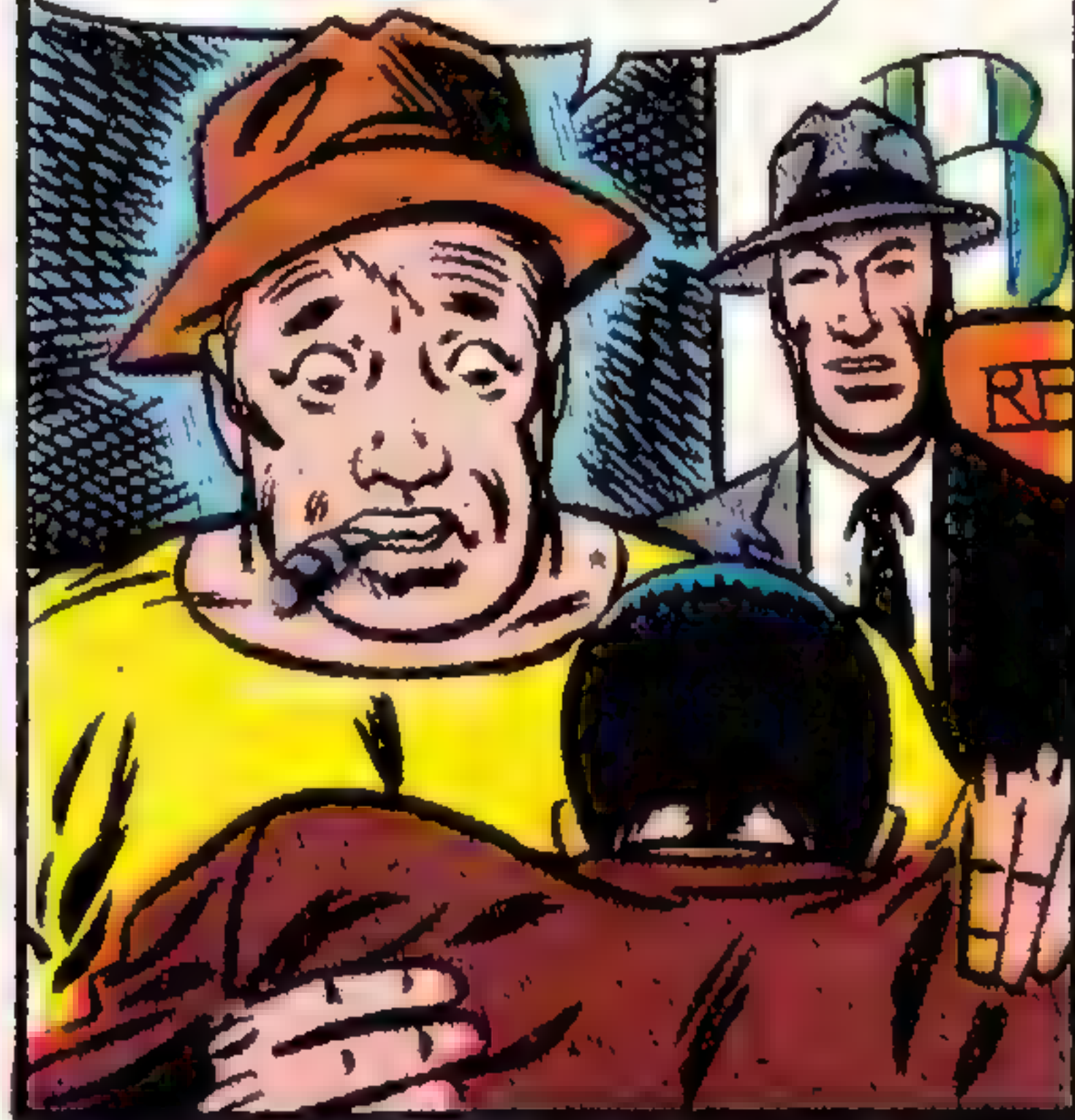


HENRY, WAIT...
UMMMP!

HEY, LOOK
WHERE
YOU'RE
GOING!



WHADDYA KNOW! THE CHUMP
FAINTED WHEN HE TOOK
ONE LOOK AT ME! I
DIDN'T BANG INTO HIM
THAT HARD! HEY, SOME-
BODY HELP ME GET
HIM TO A DOCTOR!



I KNOW I
FAINTED,
DOCTOR!
BUT WHAT
DOES YOUR
EXAMINATION
SHOW?

MR. GAINES, PHYSICALLY,
YOU'RE FINE, BUT SOMETHING
IS BOTHERING YOU, EXERT-
ING TREMENDOUS PRES-
SURE! WHATEVER IT IS,
YOU MUST GET RID
OF IT!



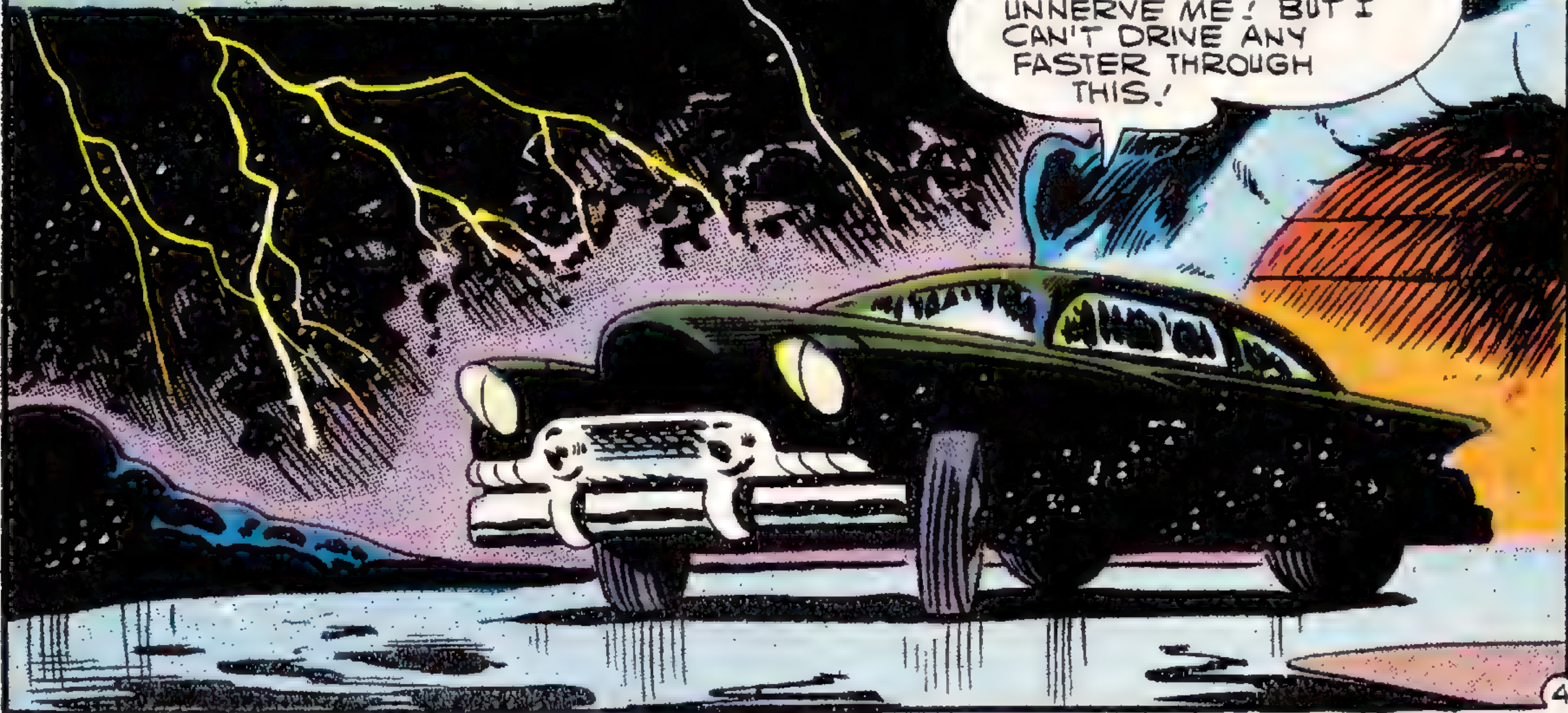
THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT BUT TO GO INTO
SECLUSION AND REST...

I'VE GOT TO GET HOME AND
LIE DOWN! MAYBE A WEEK
AWAY FROM THE OFFICE
WILL HELP!



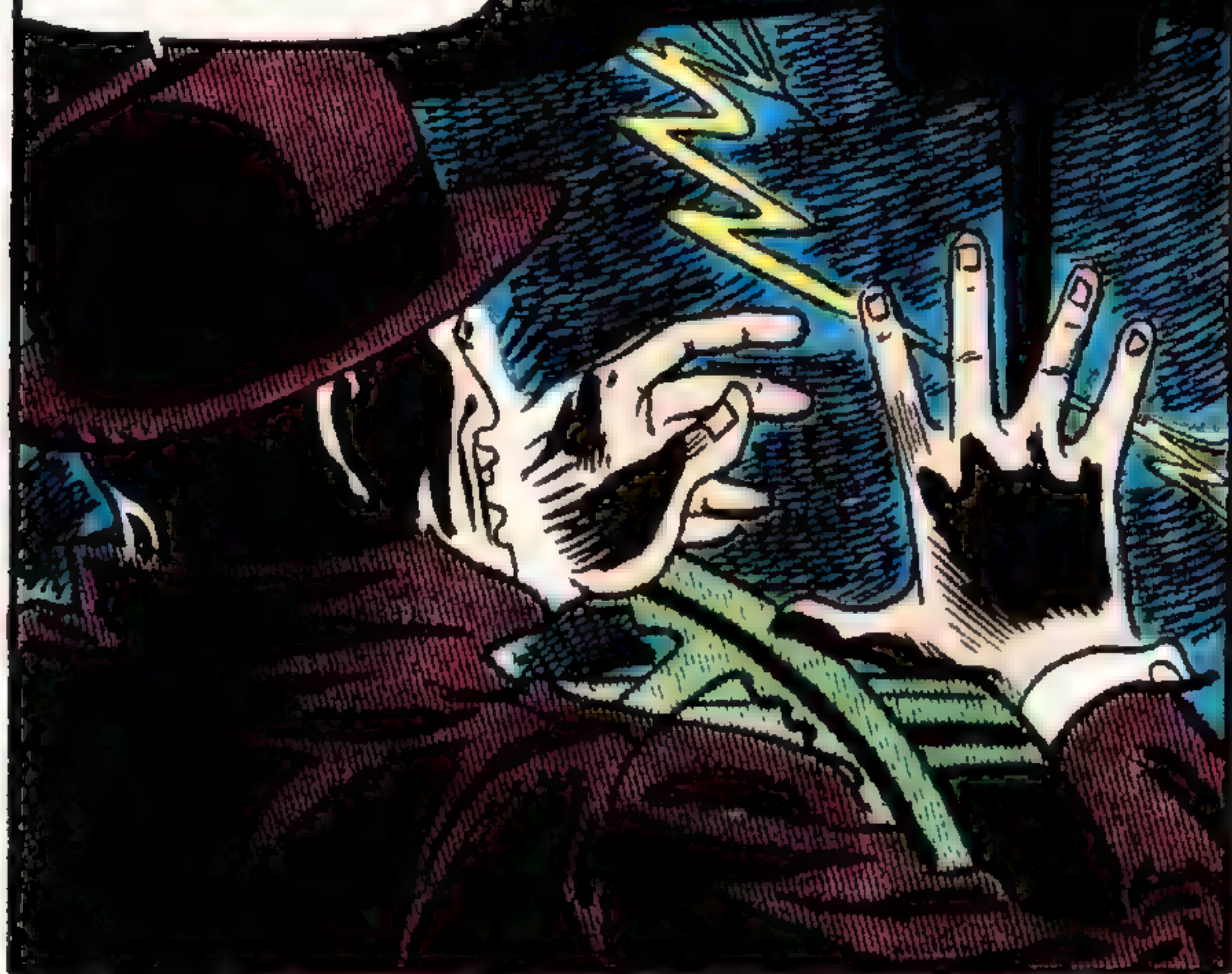
THE STORM INCREASED IN FURY...

THESE LIGHTNING BOLTS
UNNERVE ME! BUT I
CAN'T DRIVE ANY
FASTER THROUGH
THIS!



GAINES WAS ONLY FIVE MINUTES FROM HOME, WHEN ...

TH...THE SCAR!

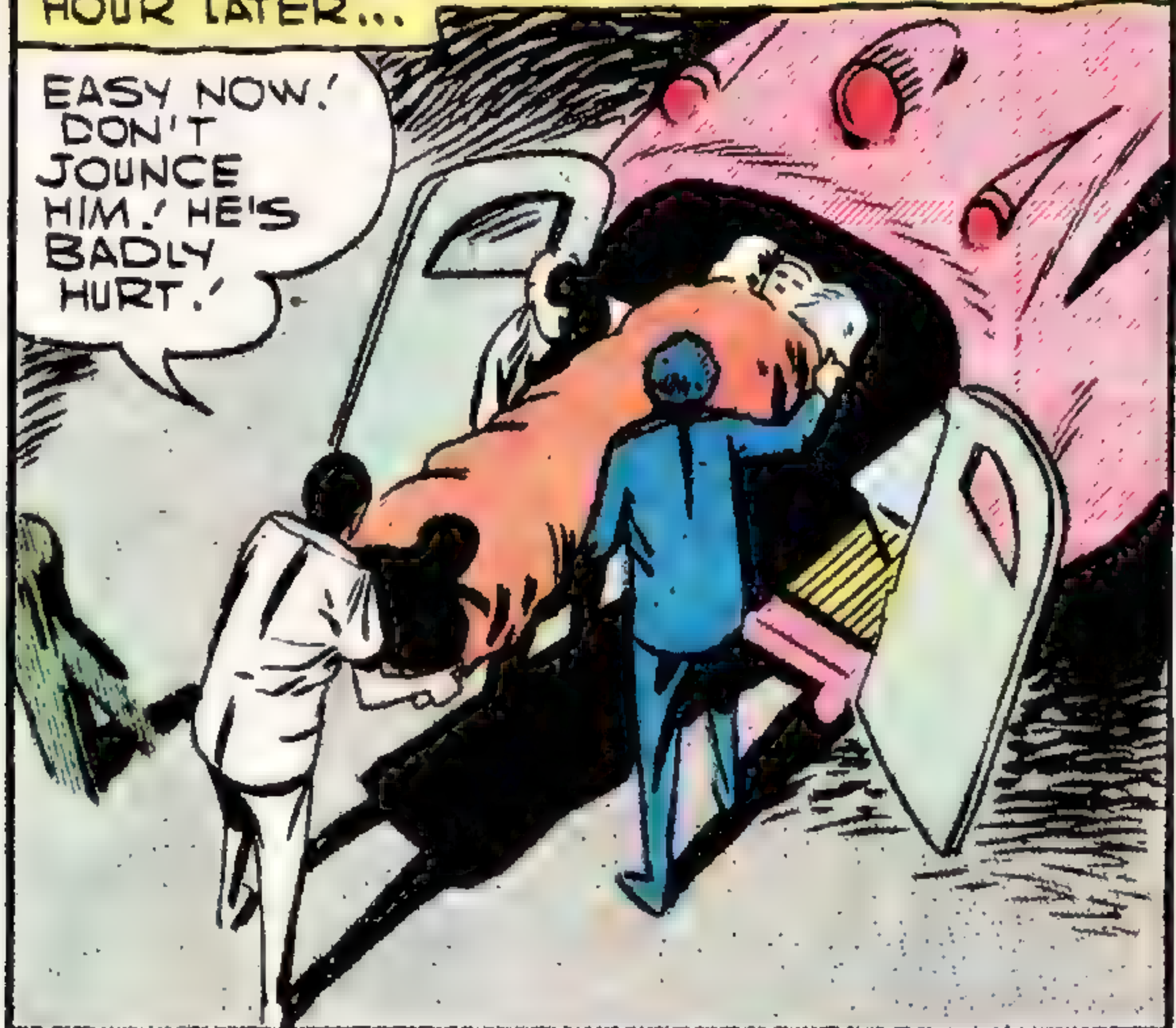


BLINDED MORE BY TERROR THAN LIGHTNING, GAINES LOST CONTROL AND...



EXTRICATED FROM THE WRECK HALF AN HOUR LATER...

EASY NOW! DON'T JOUNCE HIM! HE'S BADLY HURT!



ON THE WAY TO THE HOSPITAL...

THE SCAR AGAIN! NOW I KNOW IT'S A SIGN OF DEATH! I'M GOING TO DIE! PLEASE LET ME TALK AND CLEAR MY CONSCIENCE!

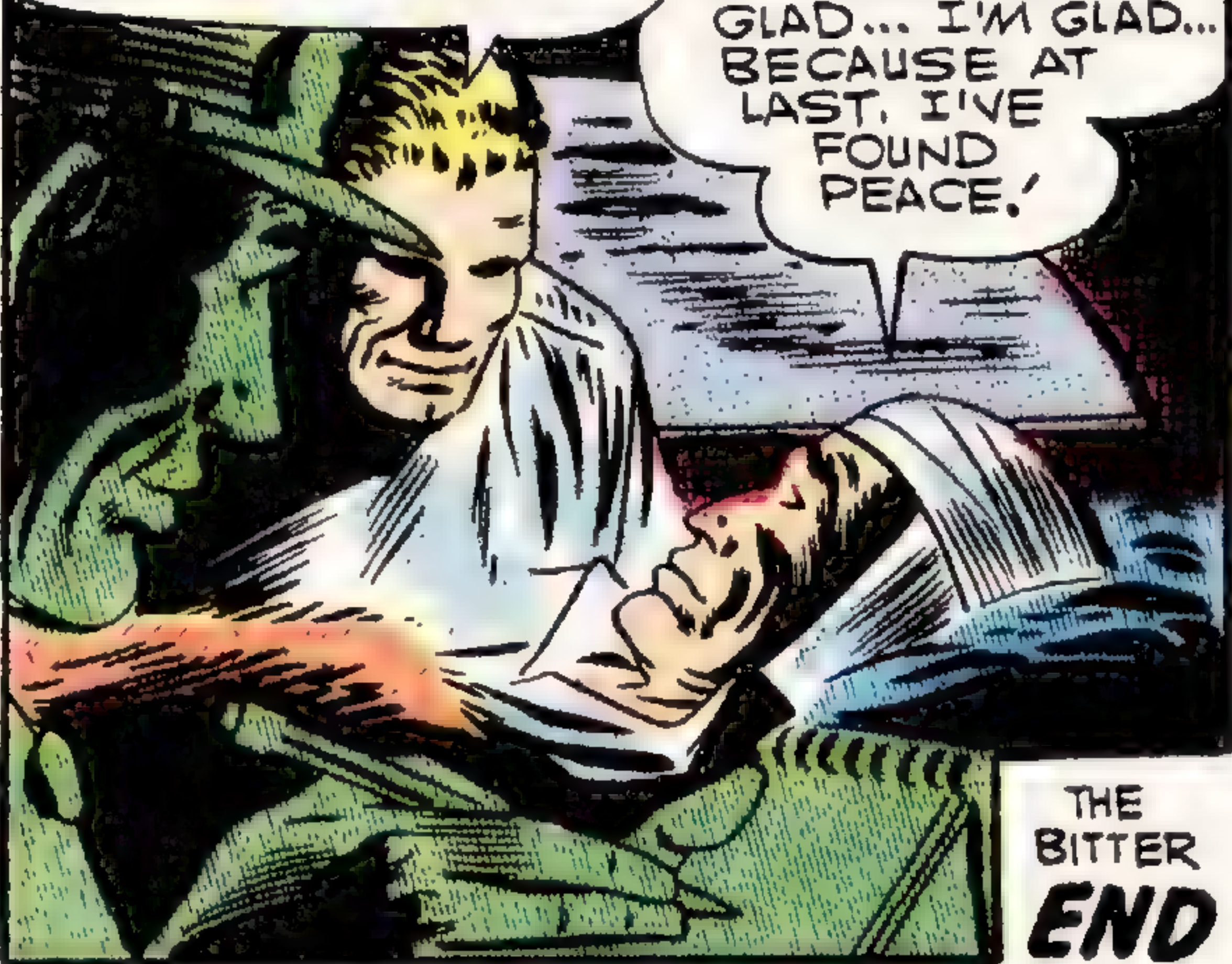


...THEN I CIRCULATED RUMORS ABOUT THE COMPANY'S LOSSES! WHEN THE STOCK FELL, I BOUGHT IT ALL MYSELF! THAT'S HOW I RUINED NOBLE, ORMSTEAD AND BRANDT! AHH! NOW I CAN DIE IN PEACE!



MR. GAINES--YOU'RE MISTAKEN! YOU'RE NOT GOING TO DIE! WE'LL HAVE YOU WALKING IN A MONTH!

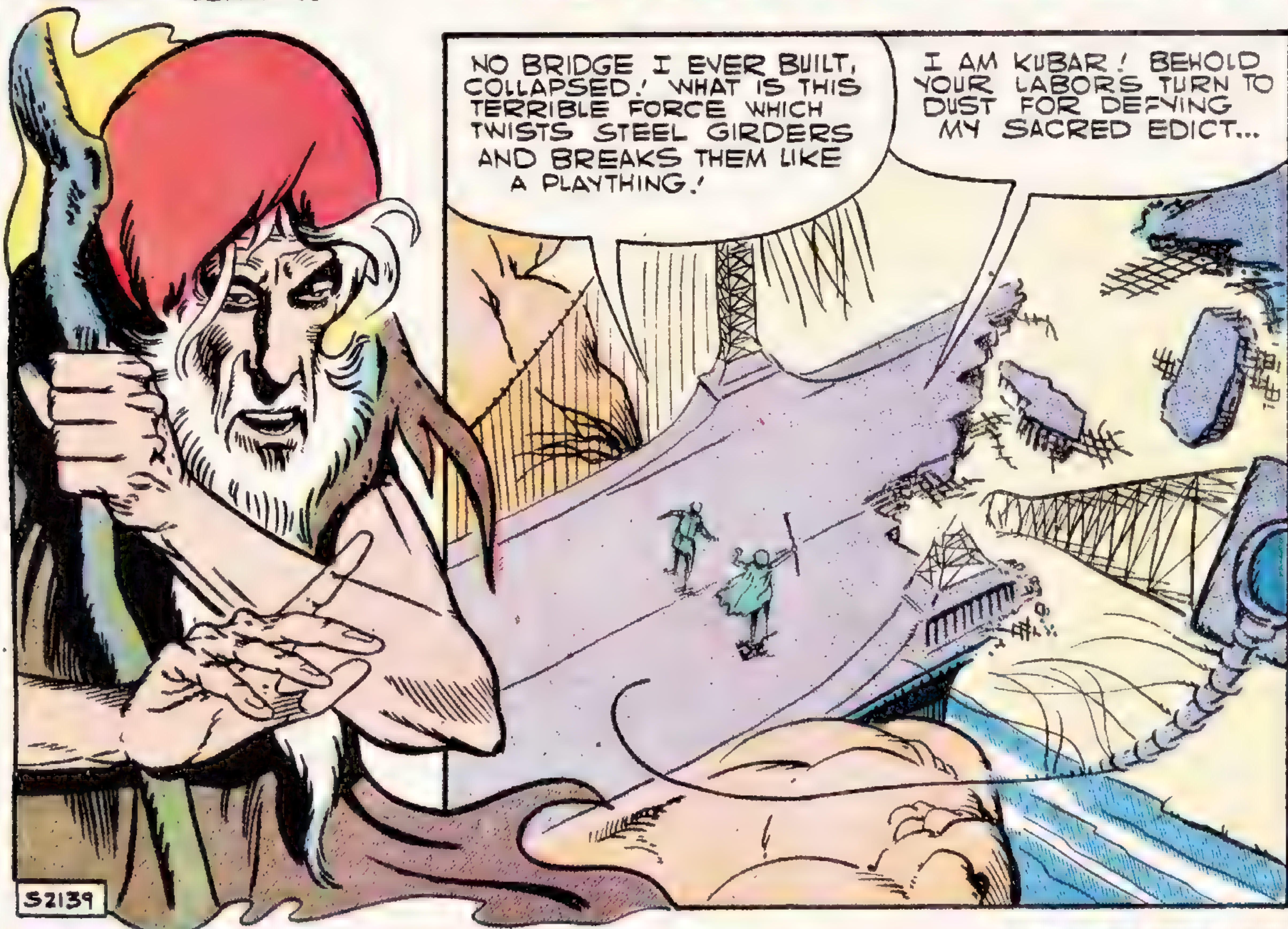
THEN ALL THE BETTER. NOW I CAN MAKE AMENDS OR PAY THE PENALTY FOR MY CRIMES! I'M GLAD... I'M GLAD... BECAUSE AT LAST, I'VE FOUND PEACE!



THE BITTER
END

COMPLETION OF THE
TRESTLE ARCH DEFIED
EVERY POWER AND
SKILL HE HAD USED
IN OVER A HUNDRED
BRIDGES HE HAD
BUILT AROUND THE
WORLD! WAS THERE
TRUTH IN THE NATIVE
MYTH, OR WAS IT
ANCIENT SUPERSTITION?
AT EVERY TURN HE
HEARD WHISPERS...
KUBAR... KUBAR....

WHERE IS Kubar?



NO BRIDGE I EVER BUILT,
COLLAPSED! WHAT IS THIS
TERRIBLE FORCE WHICH
TWISTS STEEL GIRDERS
AND BREAKS THEM LIKE
A PLAYTHING!

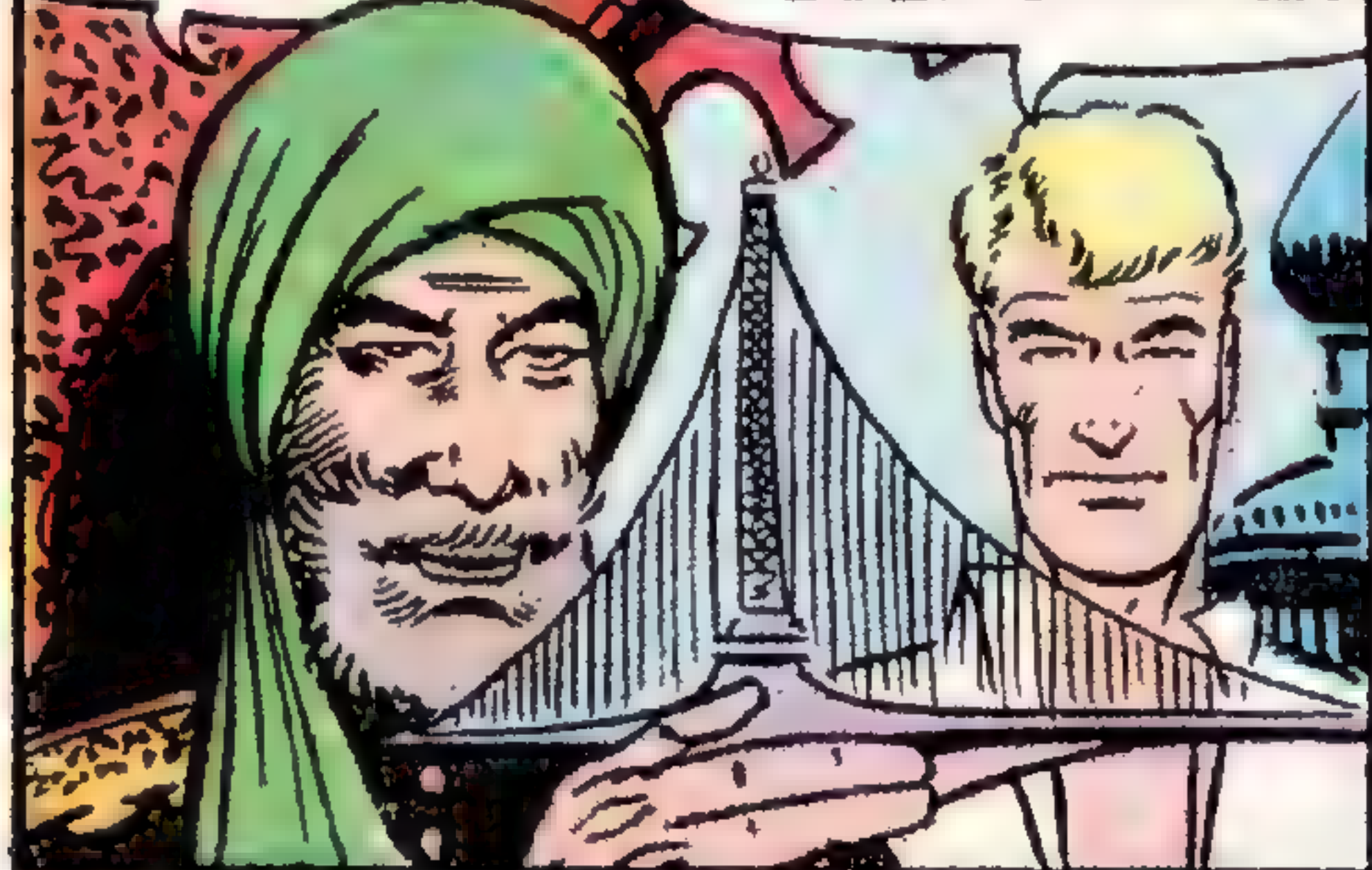
I AM KUBAR! BEHOLD
YOUR LABORS TURN TO
DUST FOR DEFYING
MY SACRED EDICT...

52139

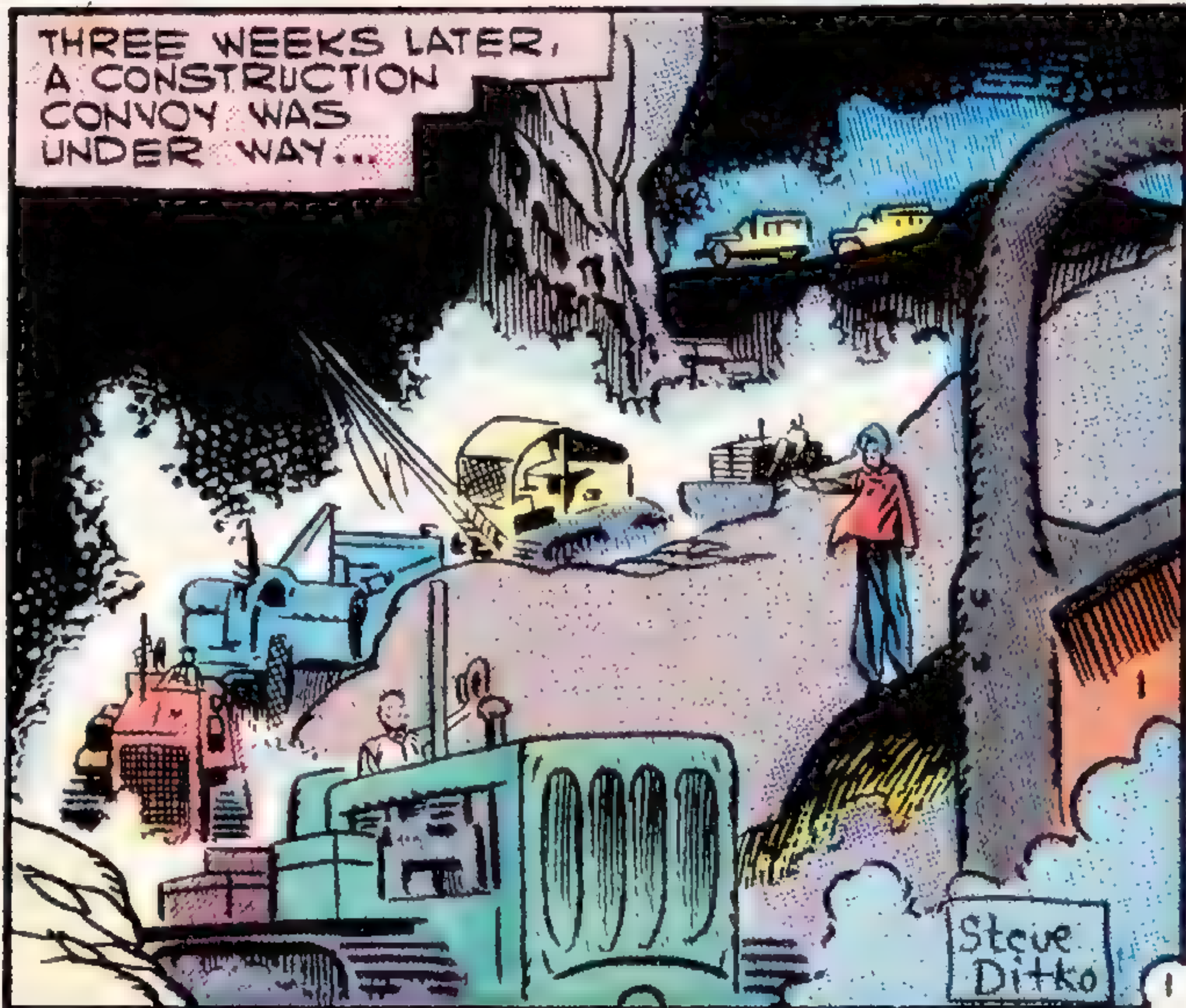
IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL STRUCTURE,
AND WHEN PRINCE RAMUHT SAW
IT...

EXACTLY WHAT I
WANTED! NOW MY CAPITOL
WILL HAVE DIRECT CON-
NECTION WITH THE OUT-
LYING HILL DISTRICTS!
YOU MAY GO AHEAD
WITH IT, MR.
WALKER!

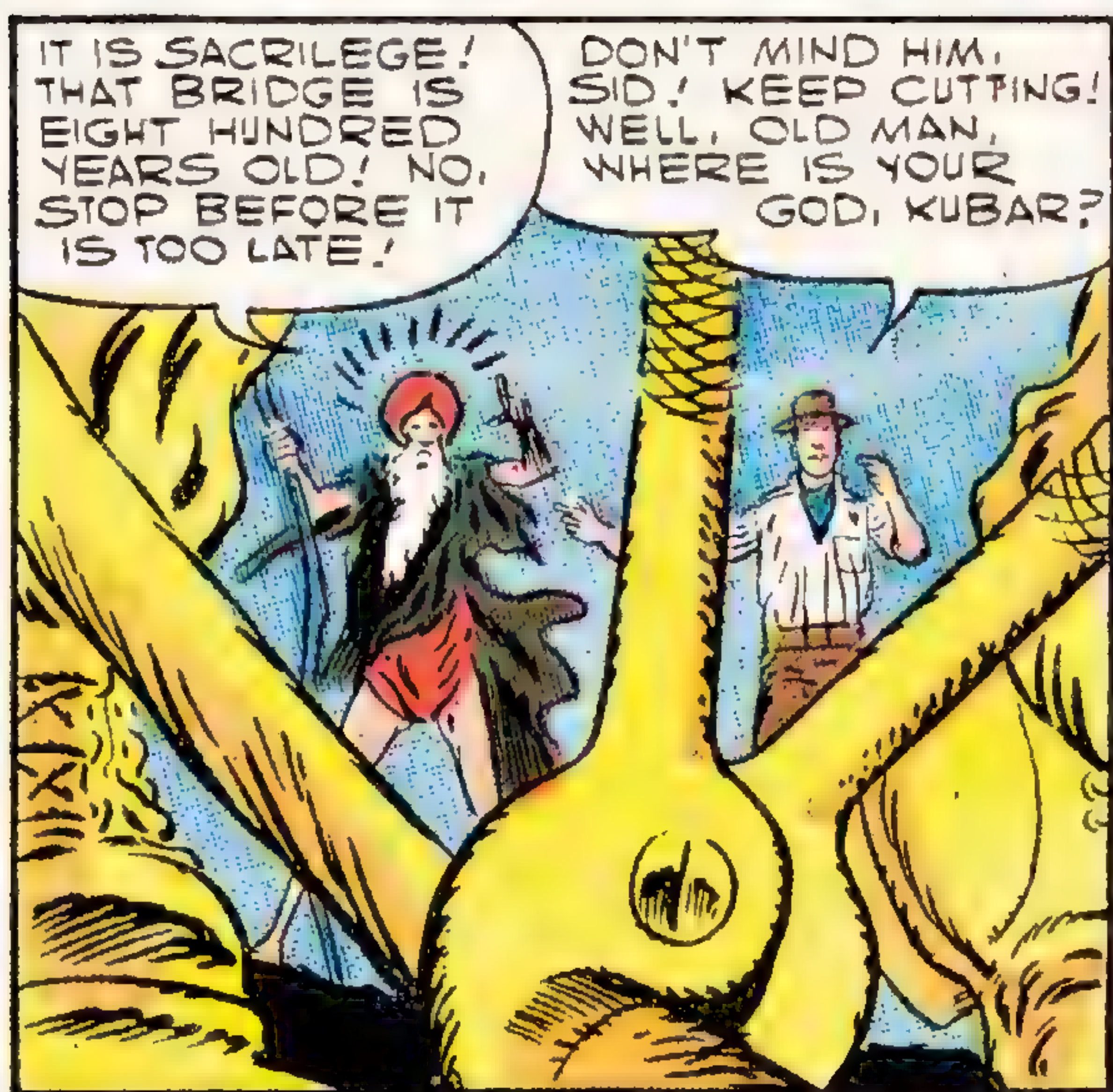
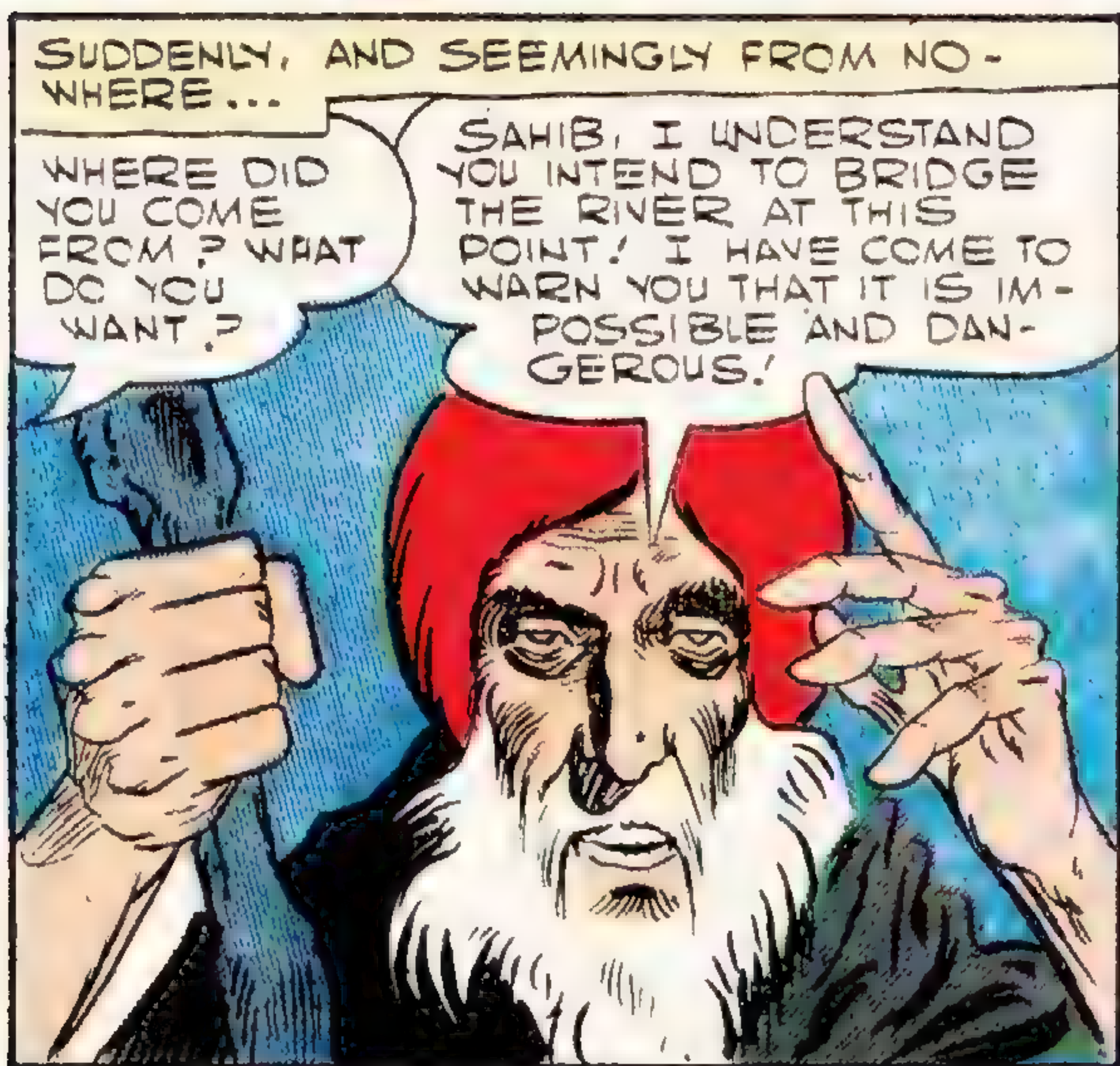
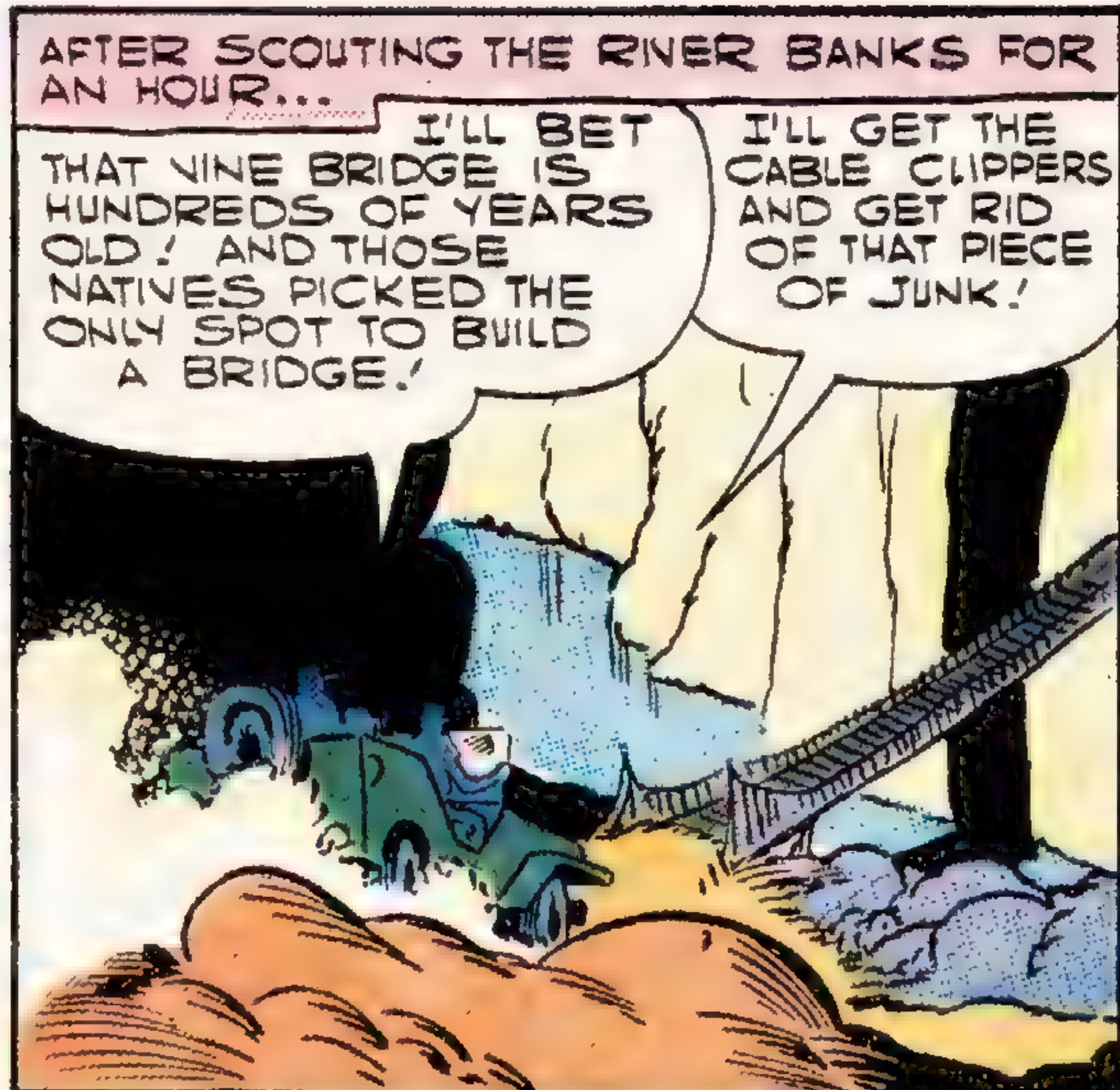
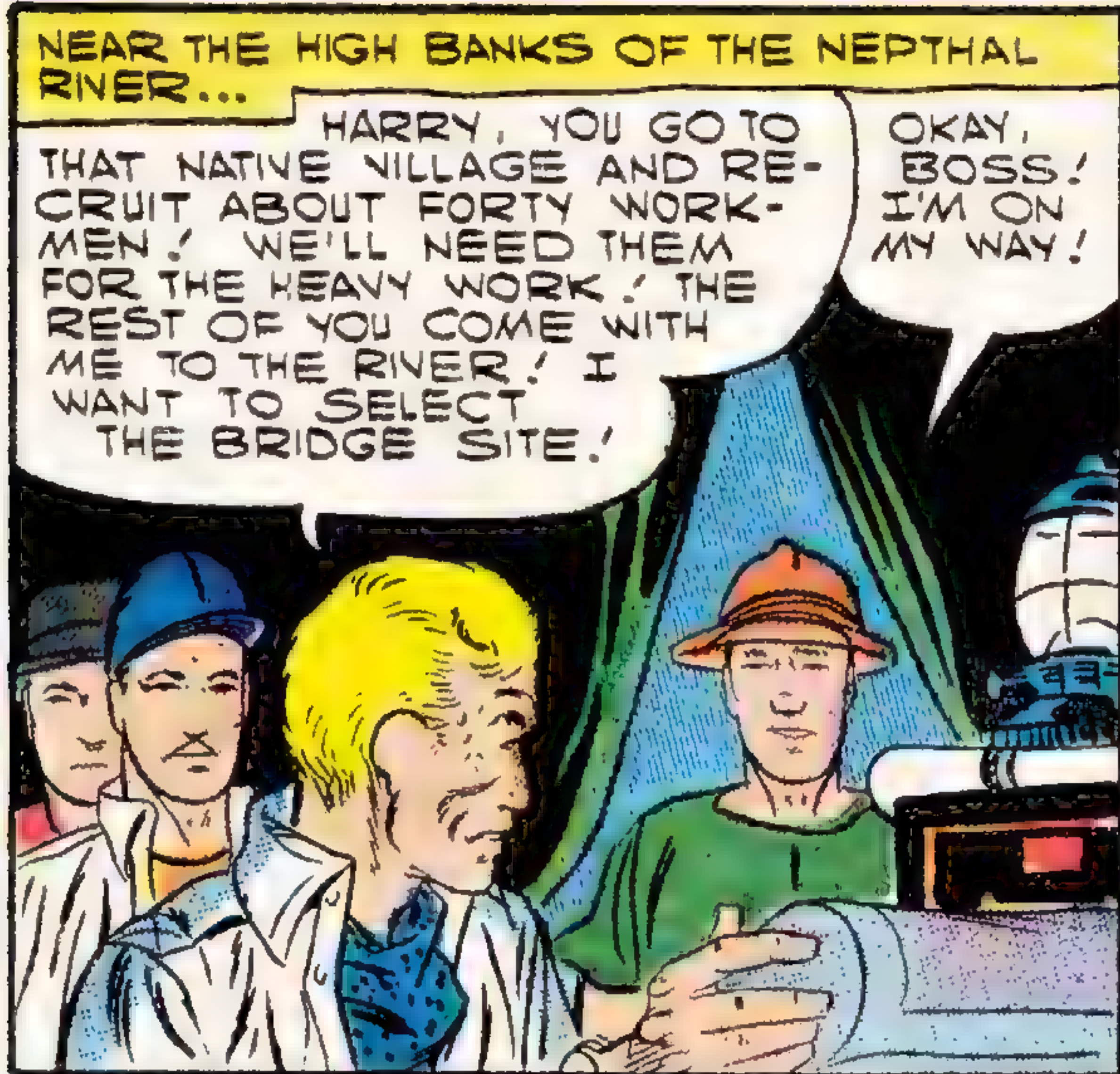
I'LL
GET TO
WORK
AT
ONCE!
THE MA-
TERIALS
HAVE ALREADY
BEEN ORDERED

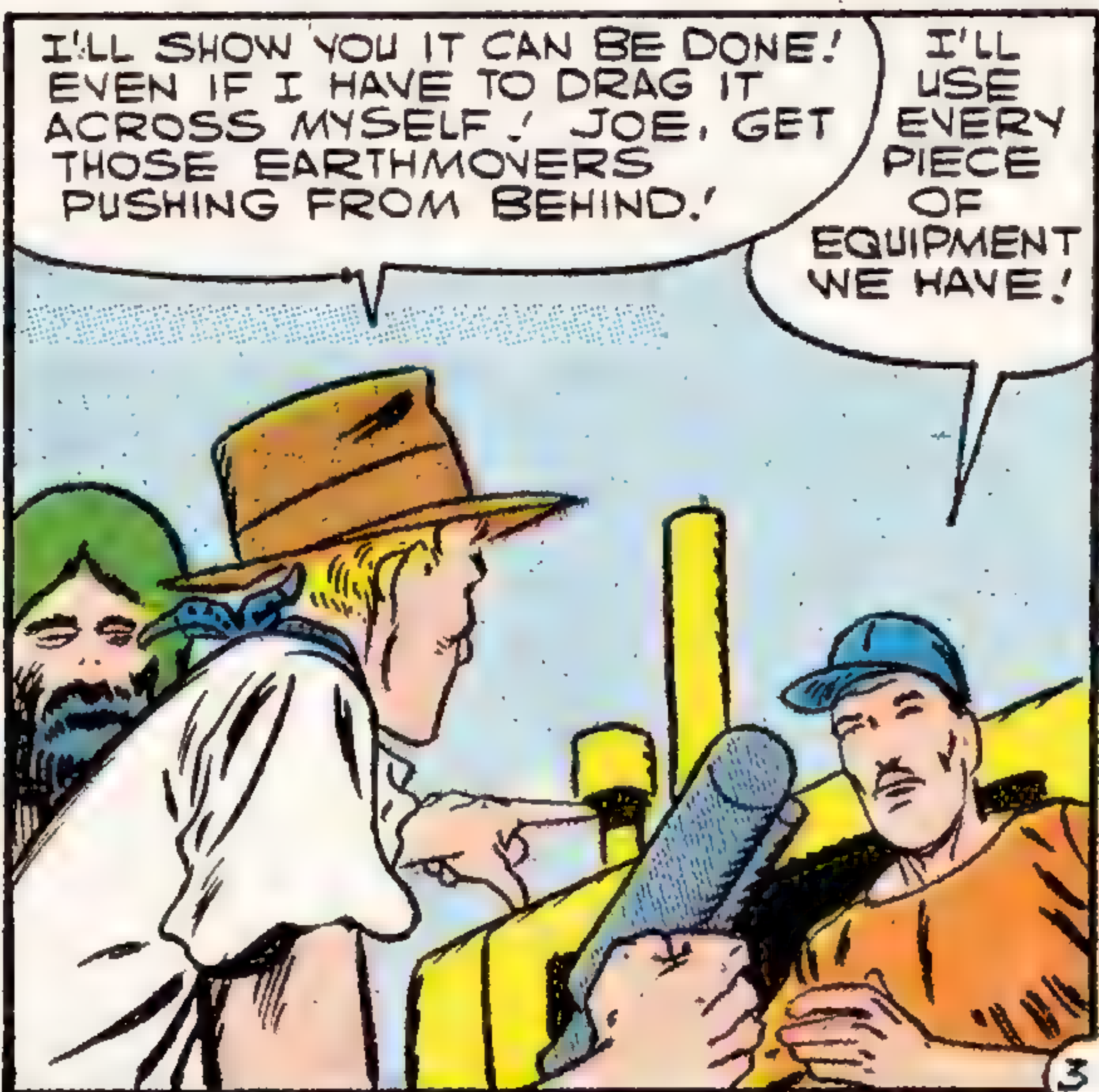
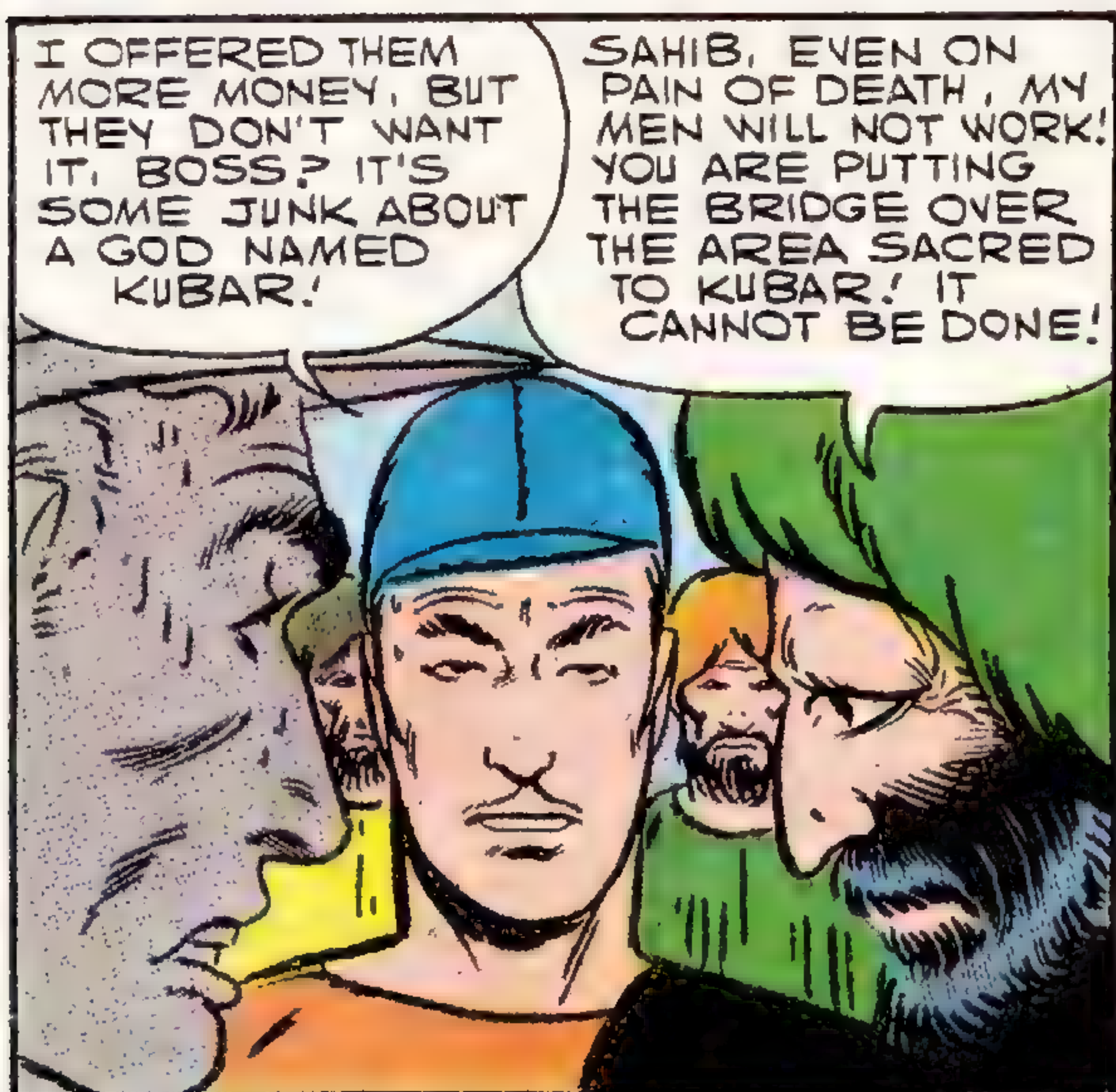
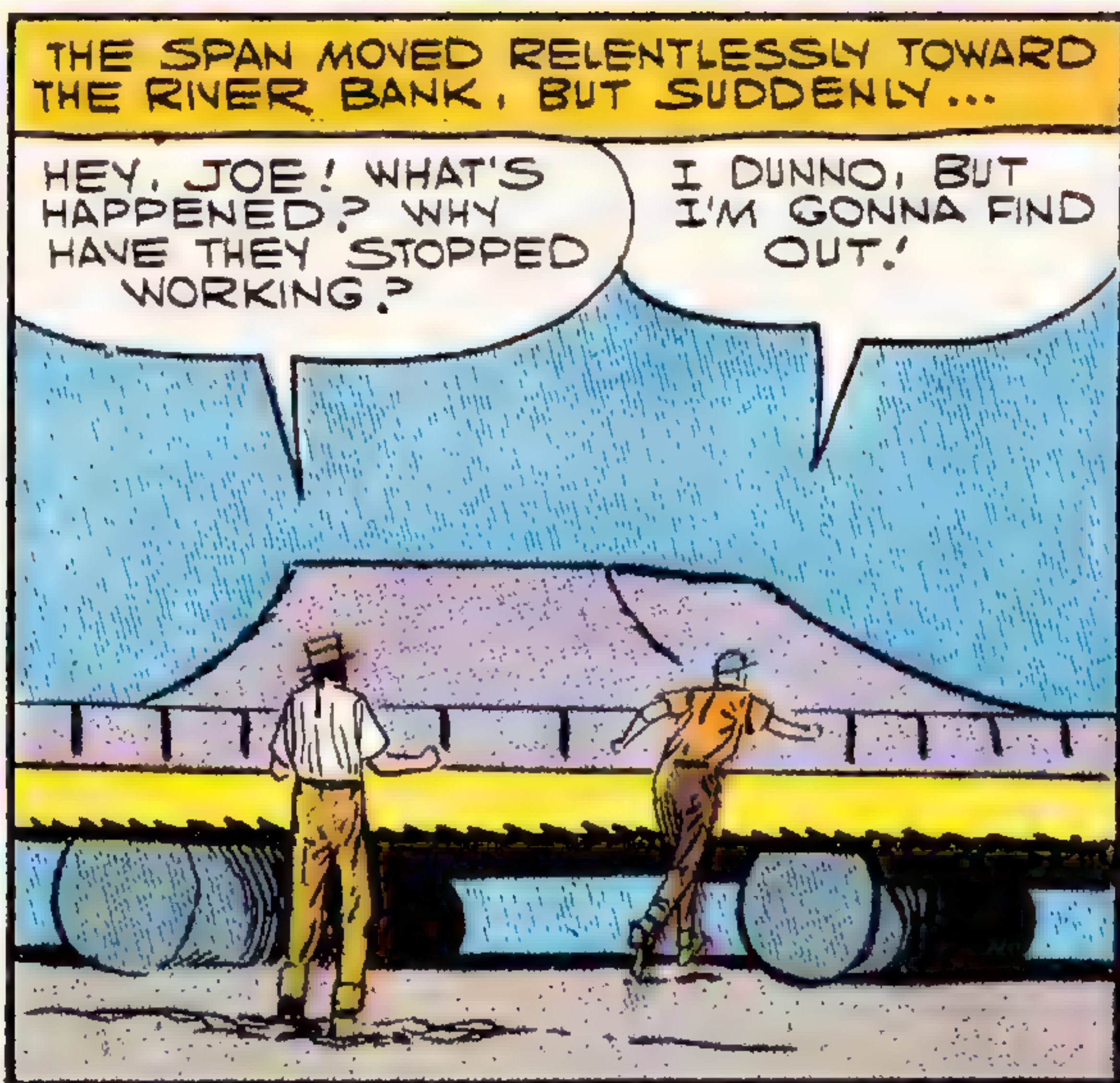
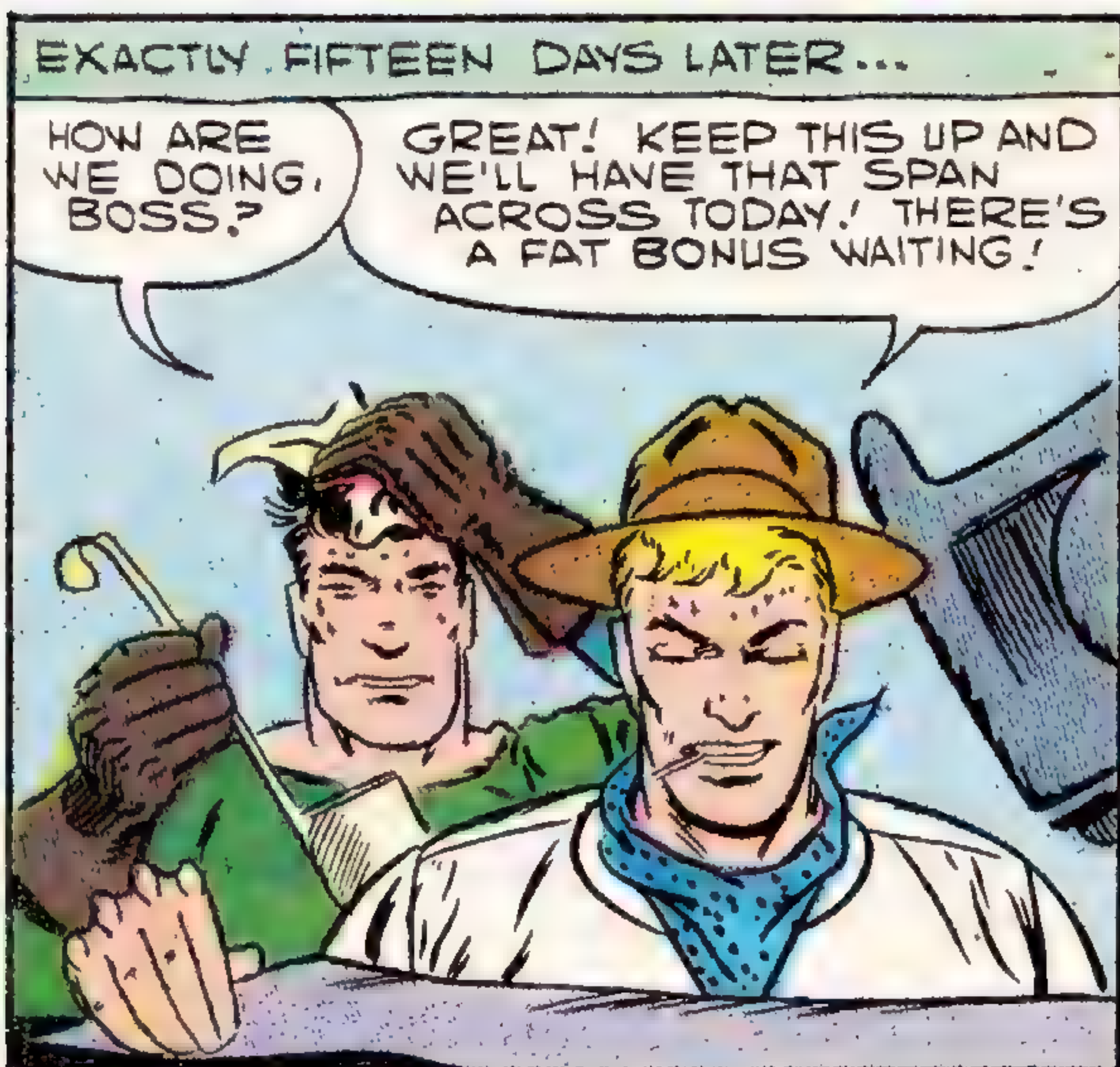
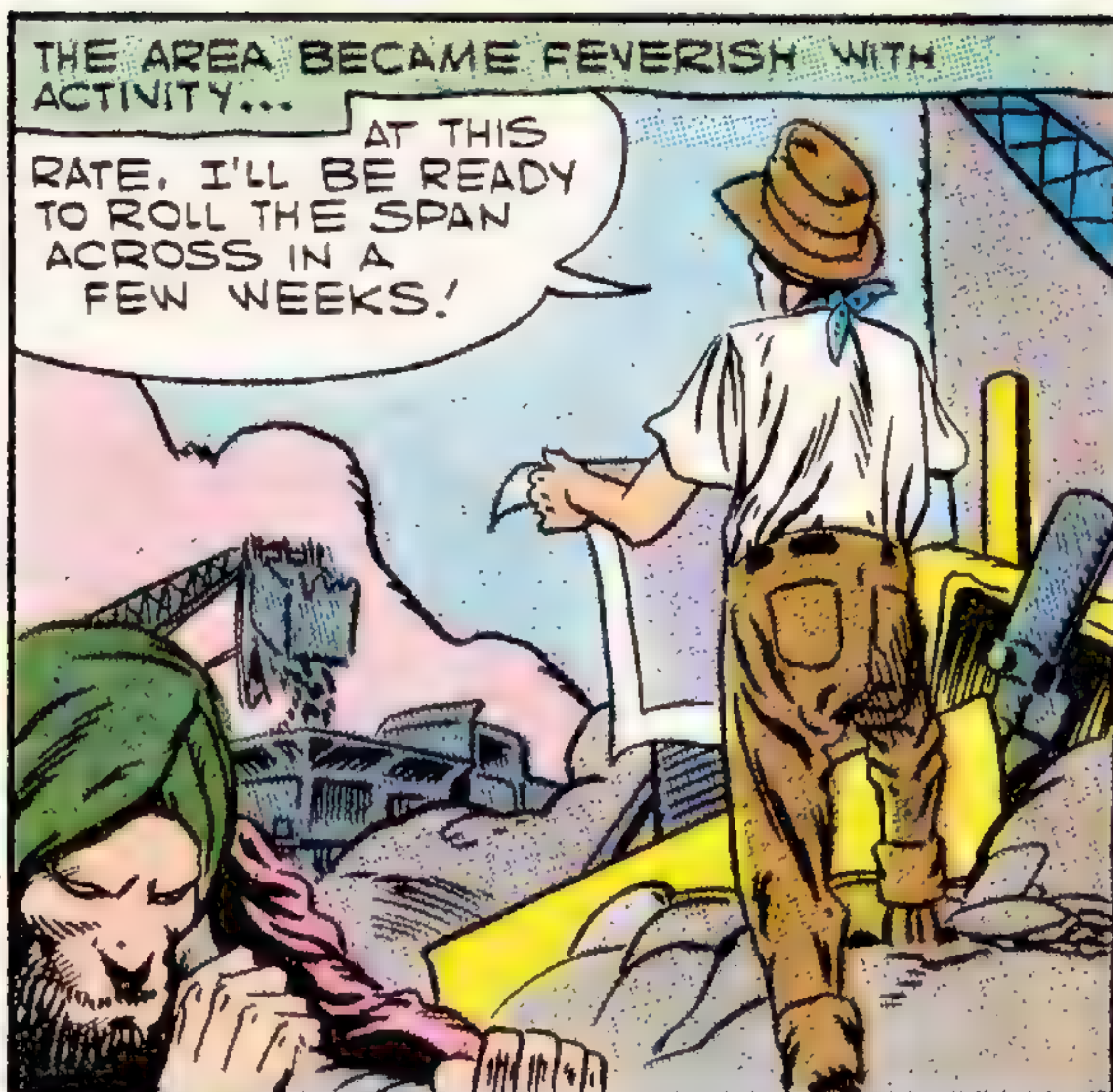


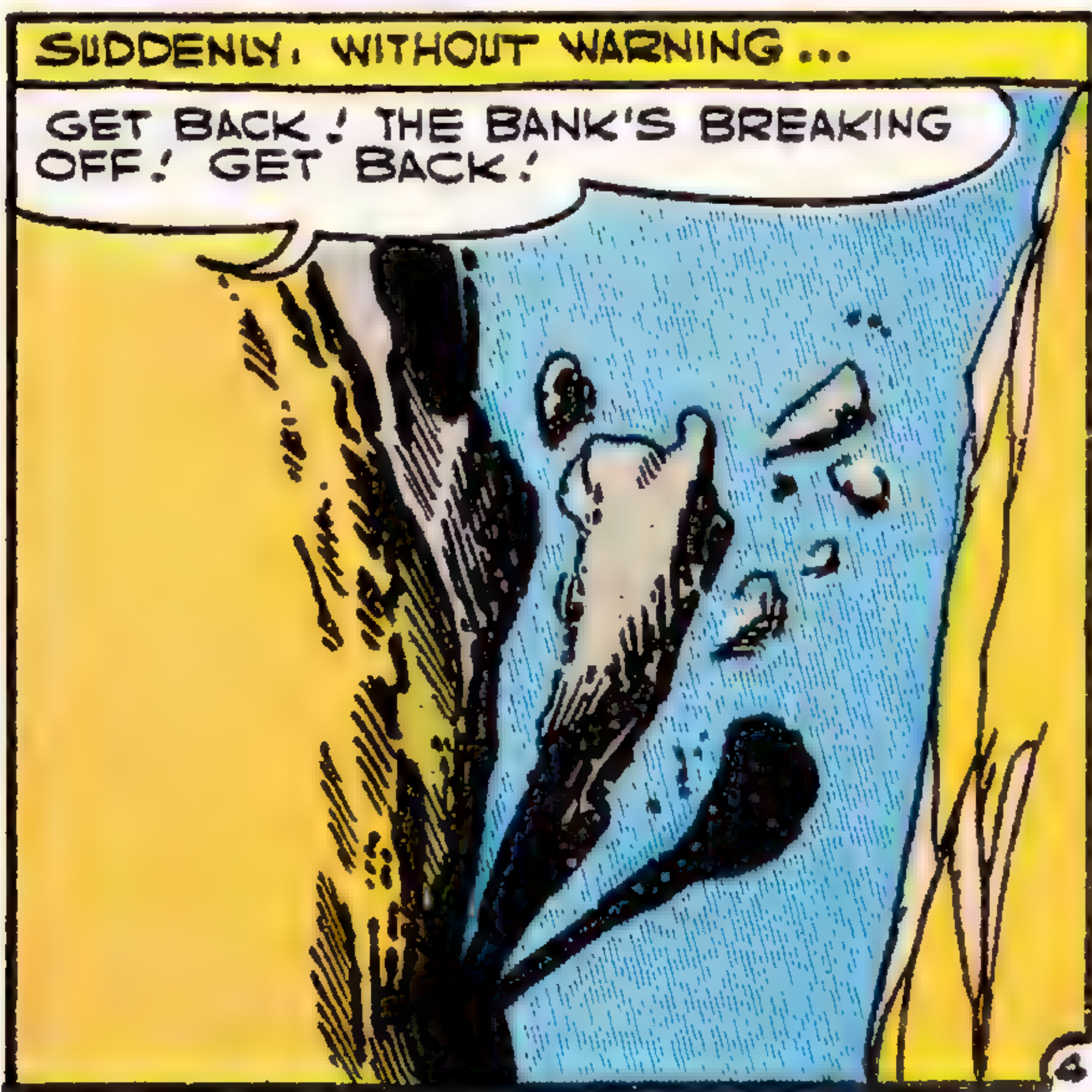
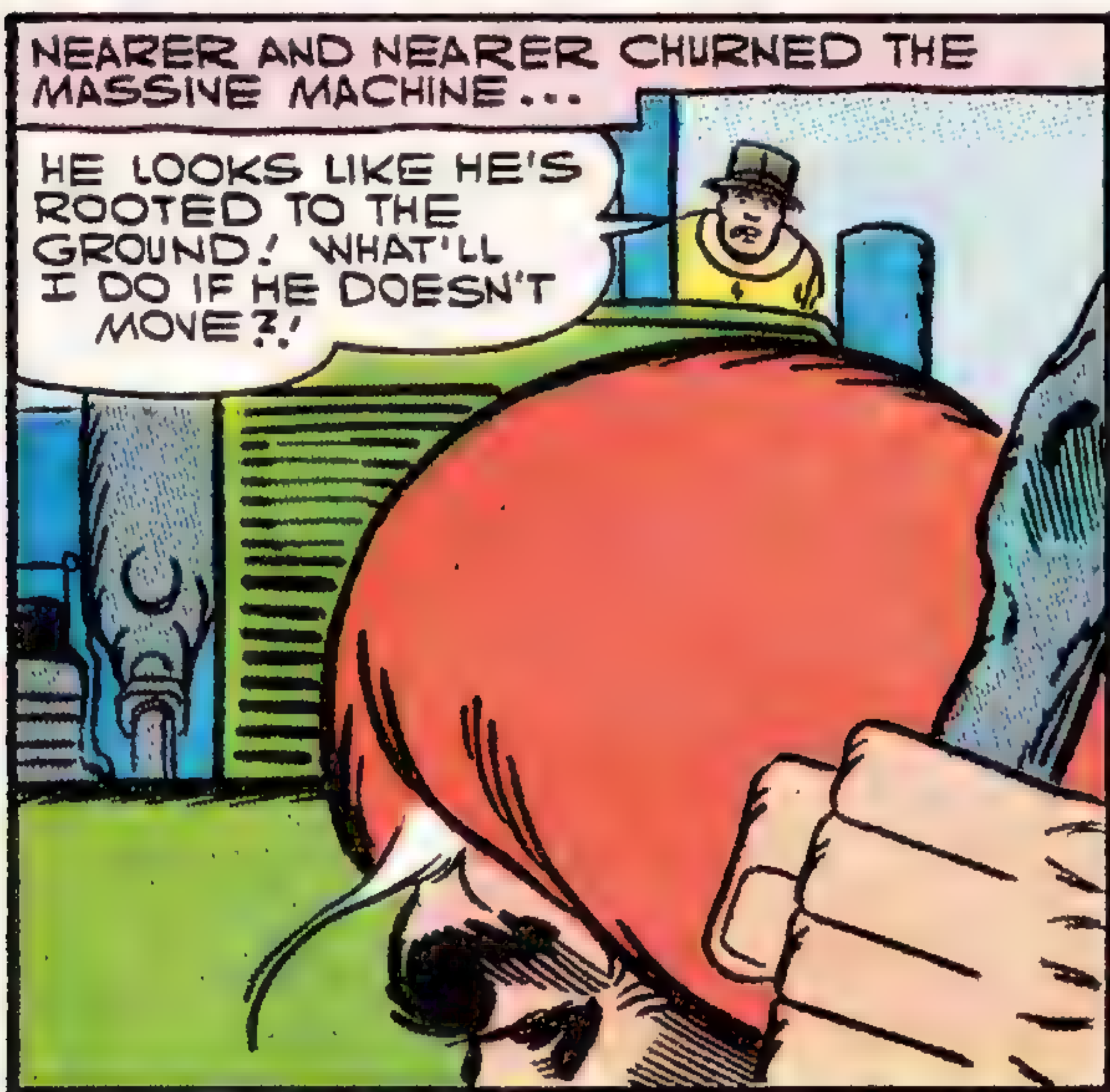
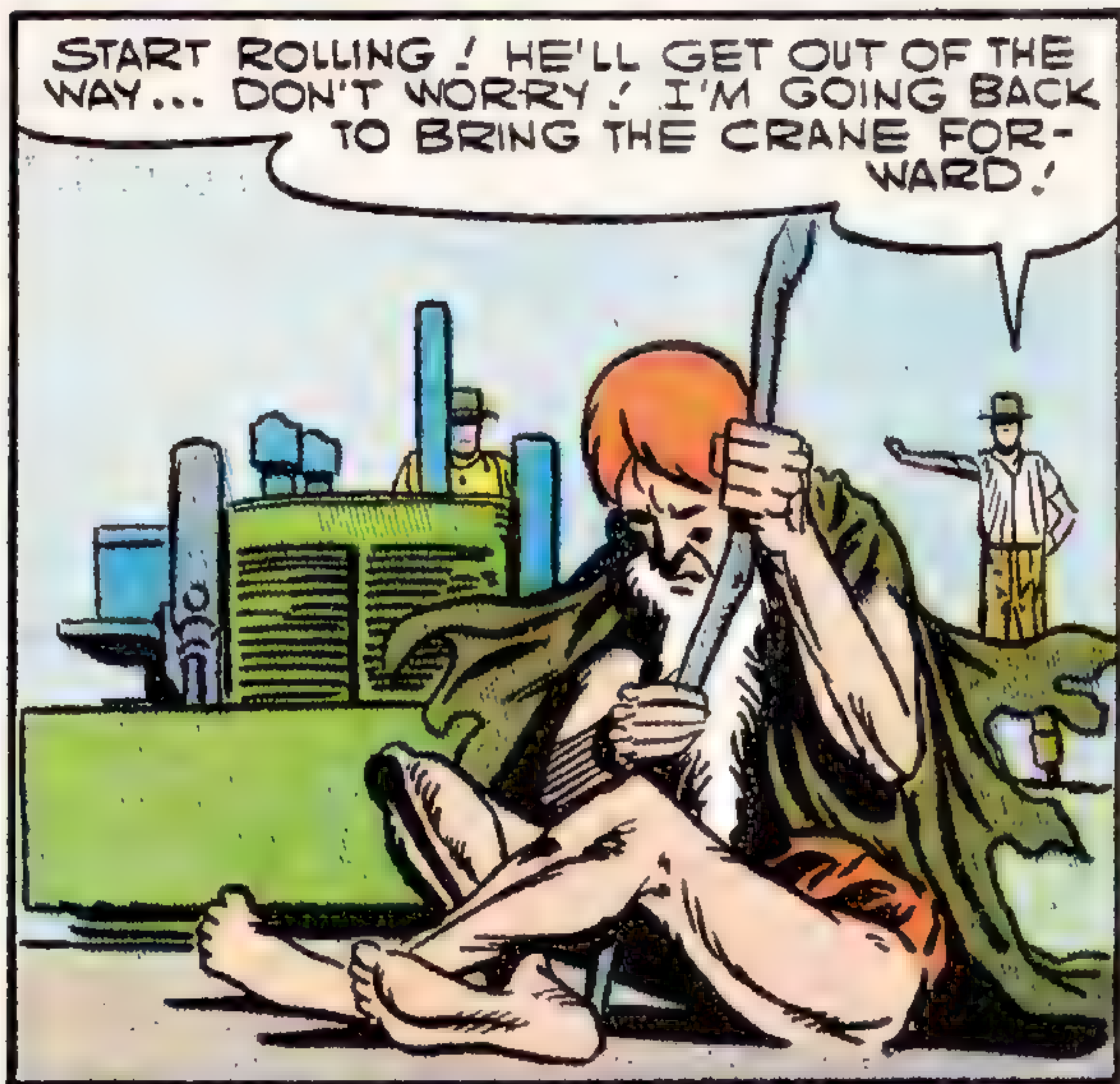
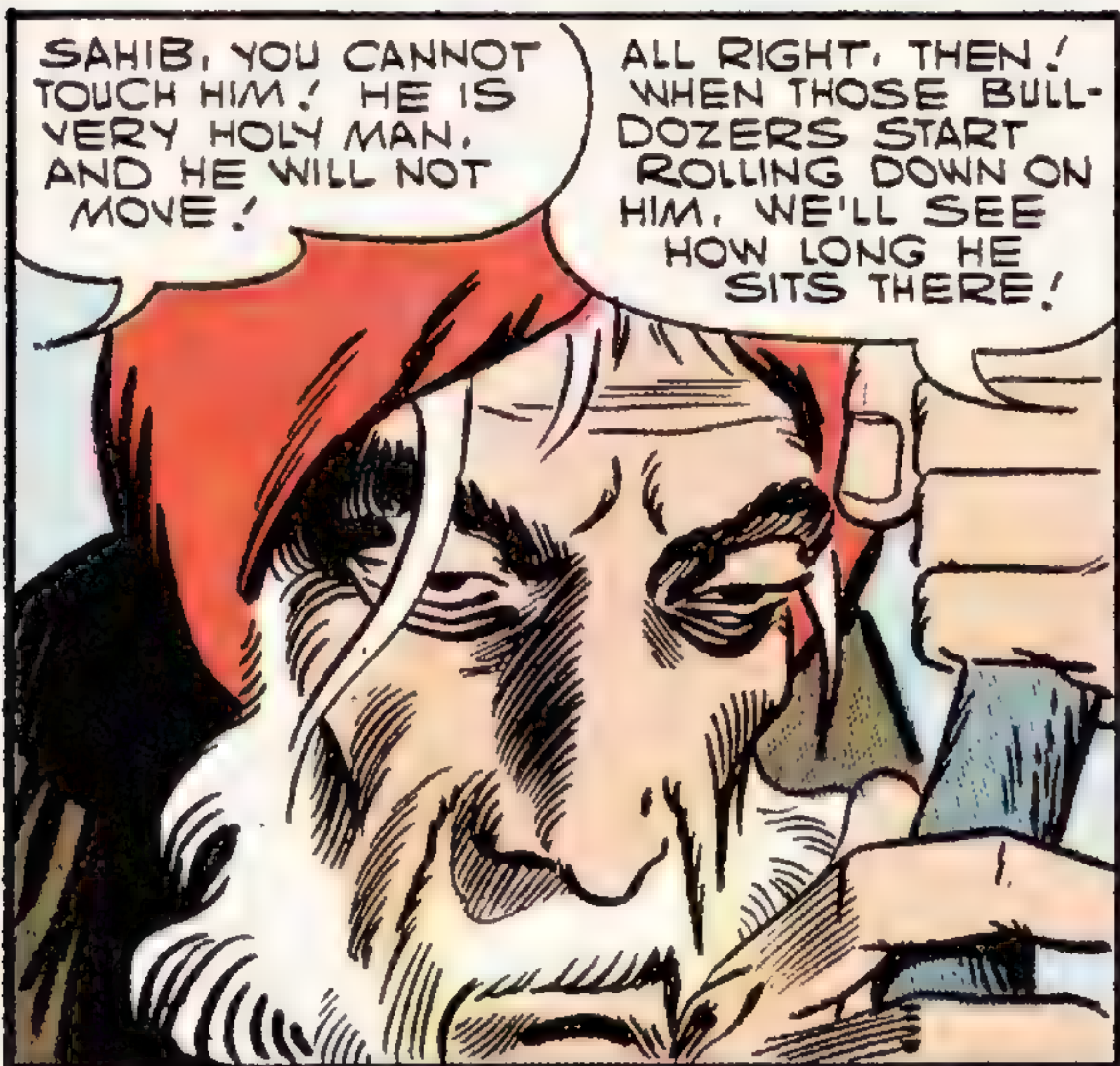
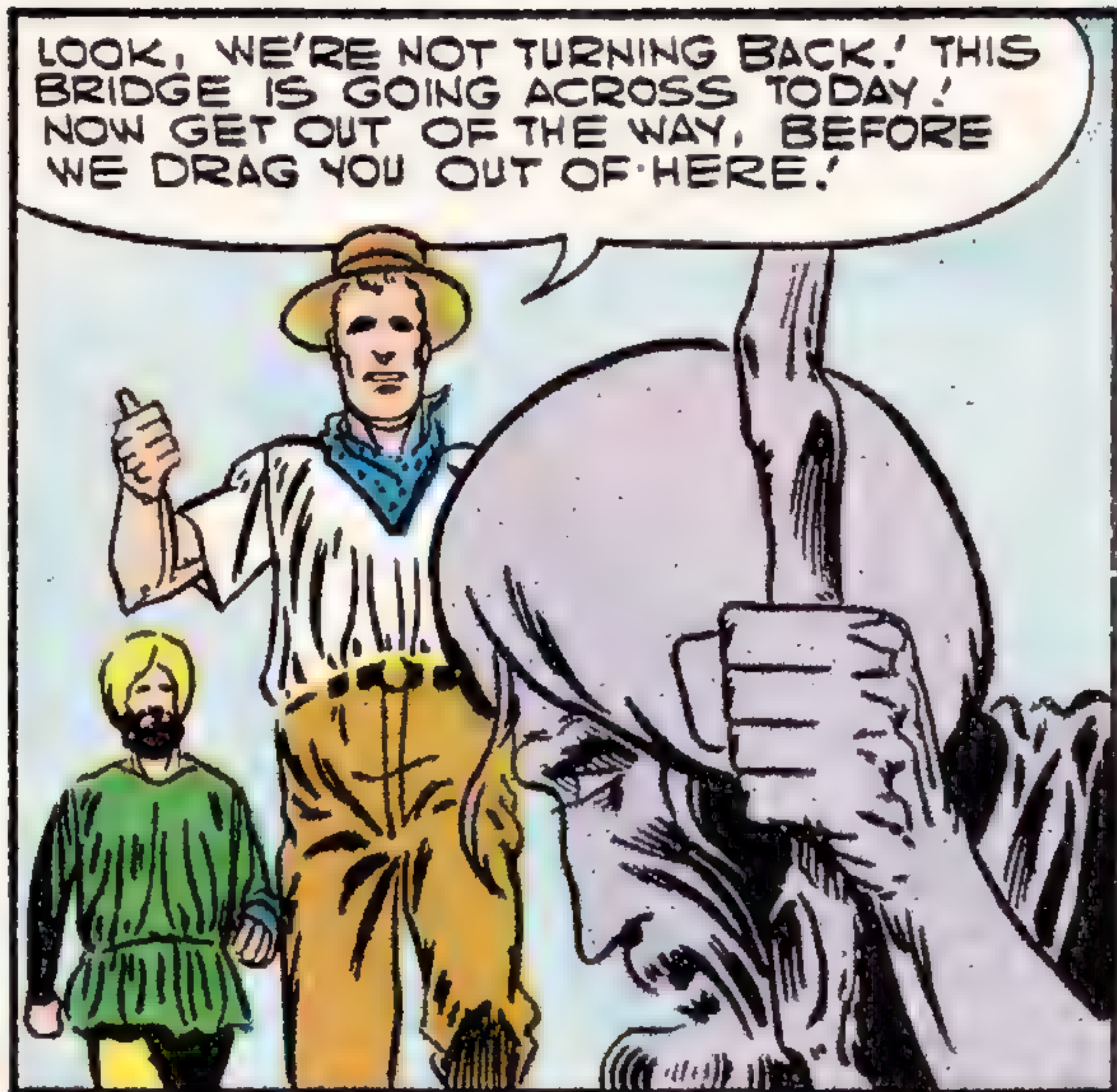
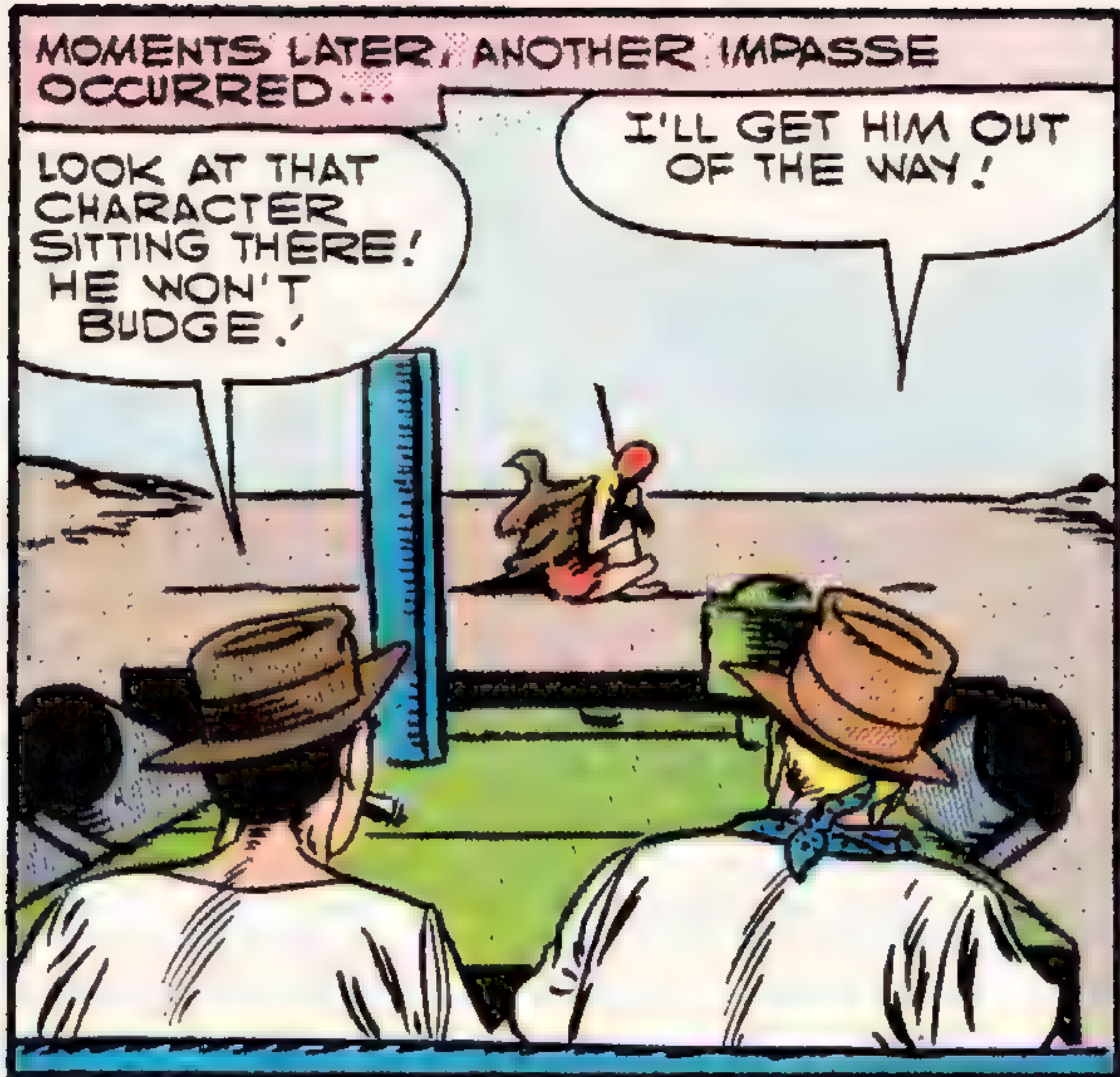
THREE WEEKS LATER,
A CONSTRUCTION
CONVOY WAS
UNDER WAY...

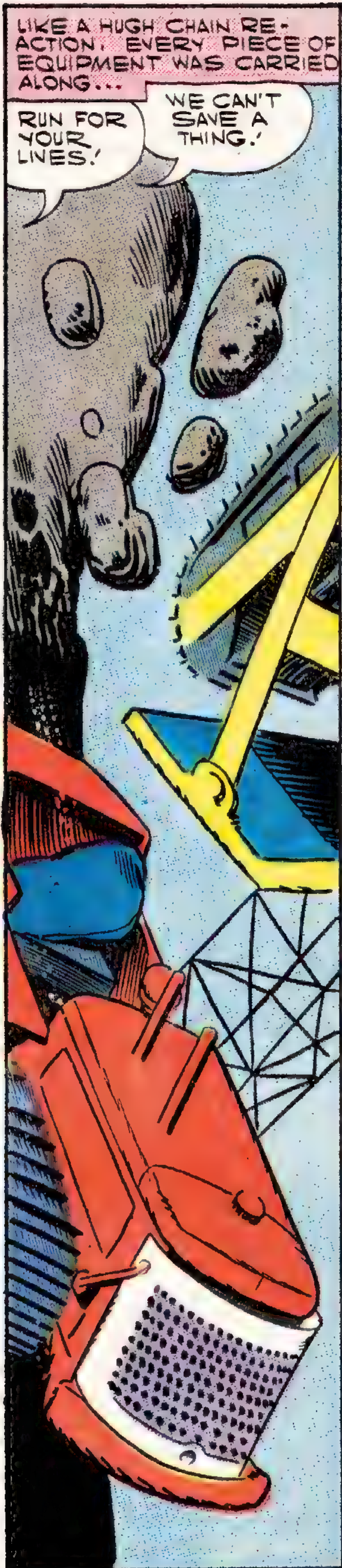


Steve
Ditko









LIKE A HUGE CHAIN RE-ACTION, EVERY PIECE OF EQUIPMENT WAS CARRIED ALONG...

RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!

WE CAN'T SAVE A THING!

LATER, THEY RETURNED TO THE BANK...

THE MEN WERE SAVED! BUT THAT OLD INDIAN AND EVERY PIECE OF EQUIPMENT WENT DOWN!

I EXAMINED THIS SITE WITH YOU! IT LOOKED SOLID AS A ROCK! WHY DID THIS HAPPEN? WHY?



BACK AT HIS FIELD TENT...

DON'T TAKE IT SO HARD, BOSS! WE'RE LUCKY TO BE ALIVE!

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE FAILED! AND I DON'T KNOW WHY! I'VE BUILT BRIDGES IN FAR WORSE PLACES AND THEY'RE STILL STANDING!



SEVERAL HOURS LATER...

EVERYTHING'S PACKED, BOSS! ARE YOU READY?

I'M RIDING DOWN TO THE BRIDGE SITE FOR A LAST LOOK! I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!



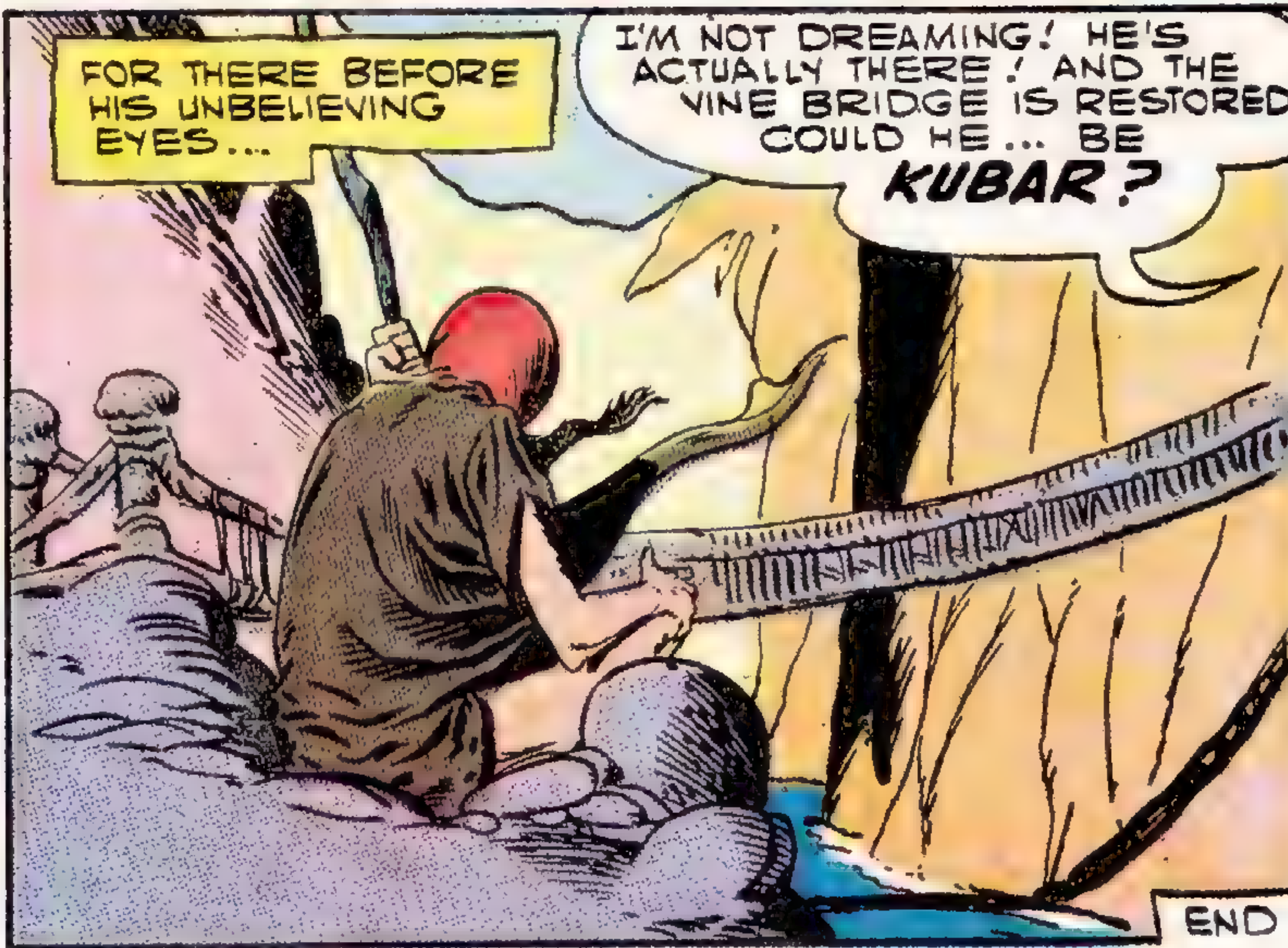
AS WALKER ALIGHTED FROM HIS JEEP AT THE BRIDGE SITE, HE FROZE IN BLANK AMAZEMENT...

IT CAN'T BE! IT JUST CAN'T BE!



FOR THERE BEFORE HIS UNBELIEVING EYES...

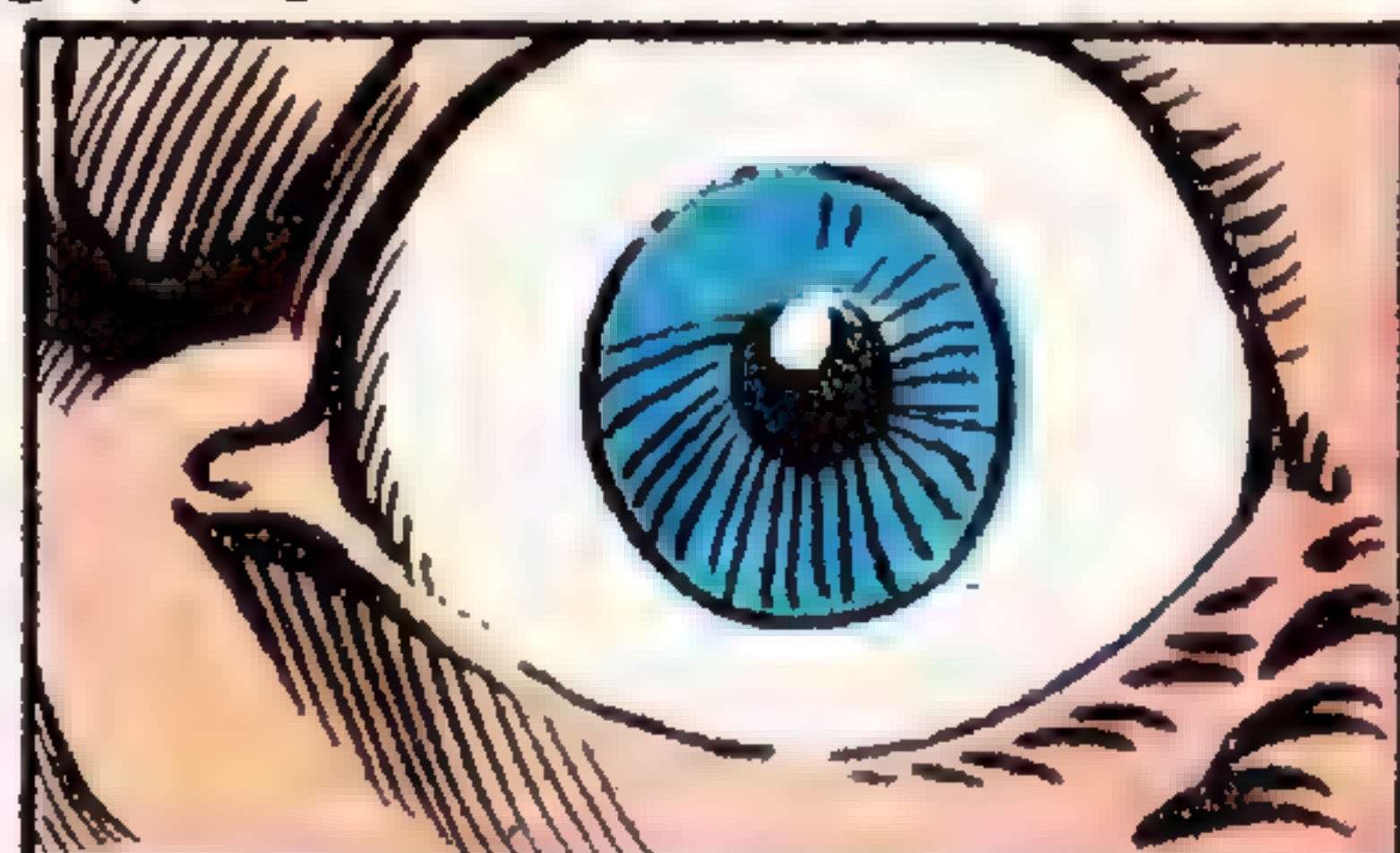
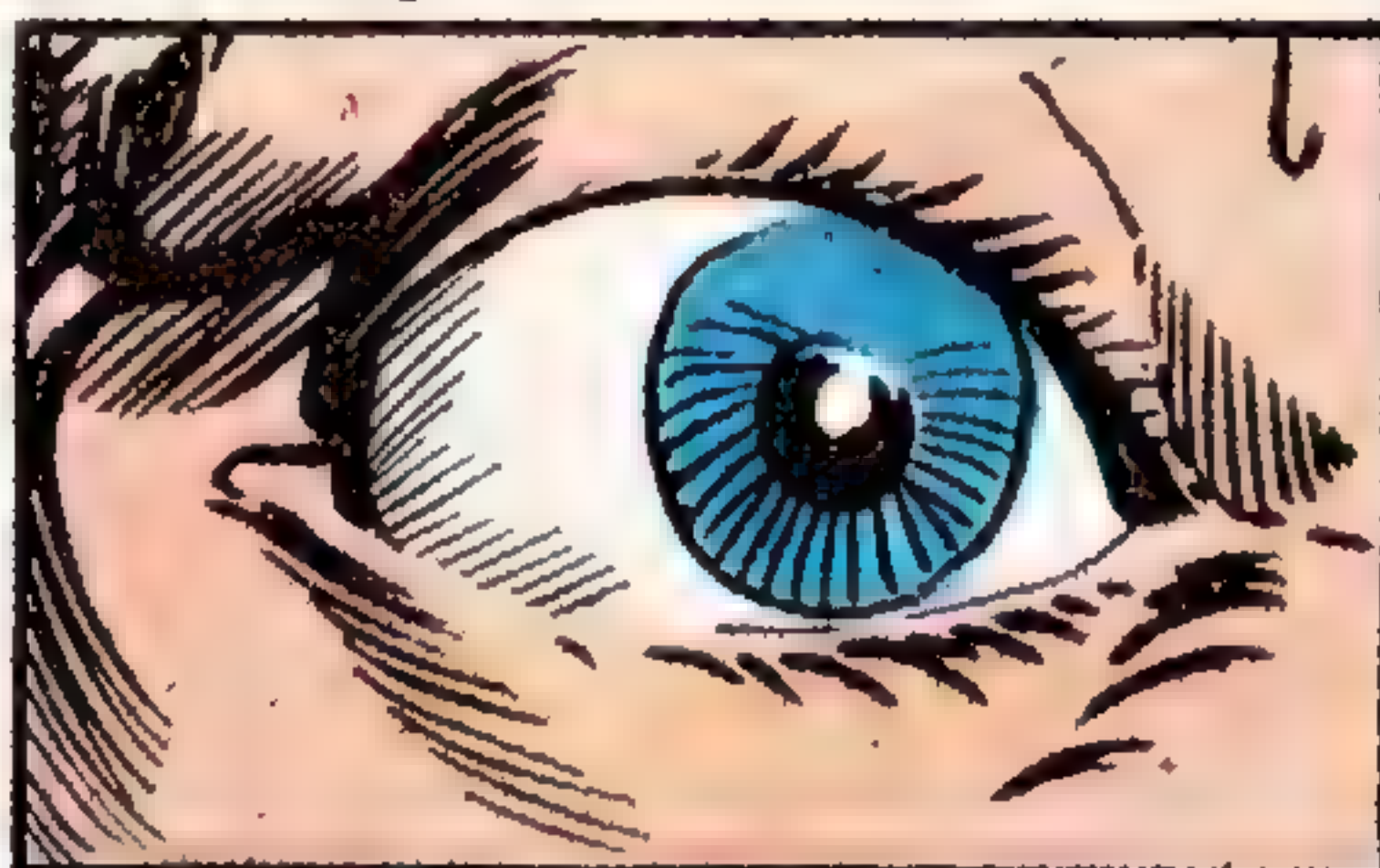
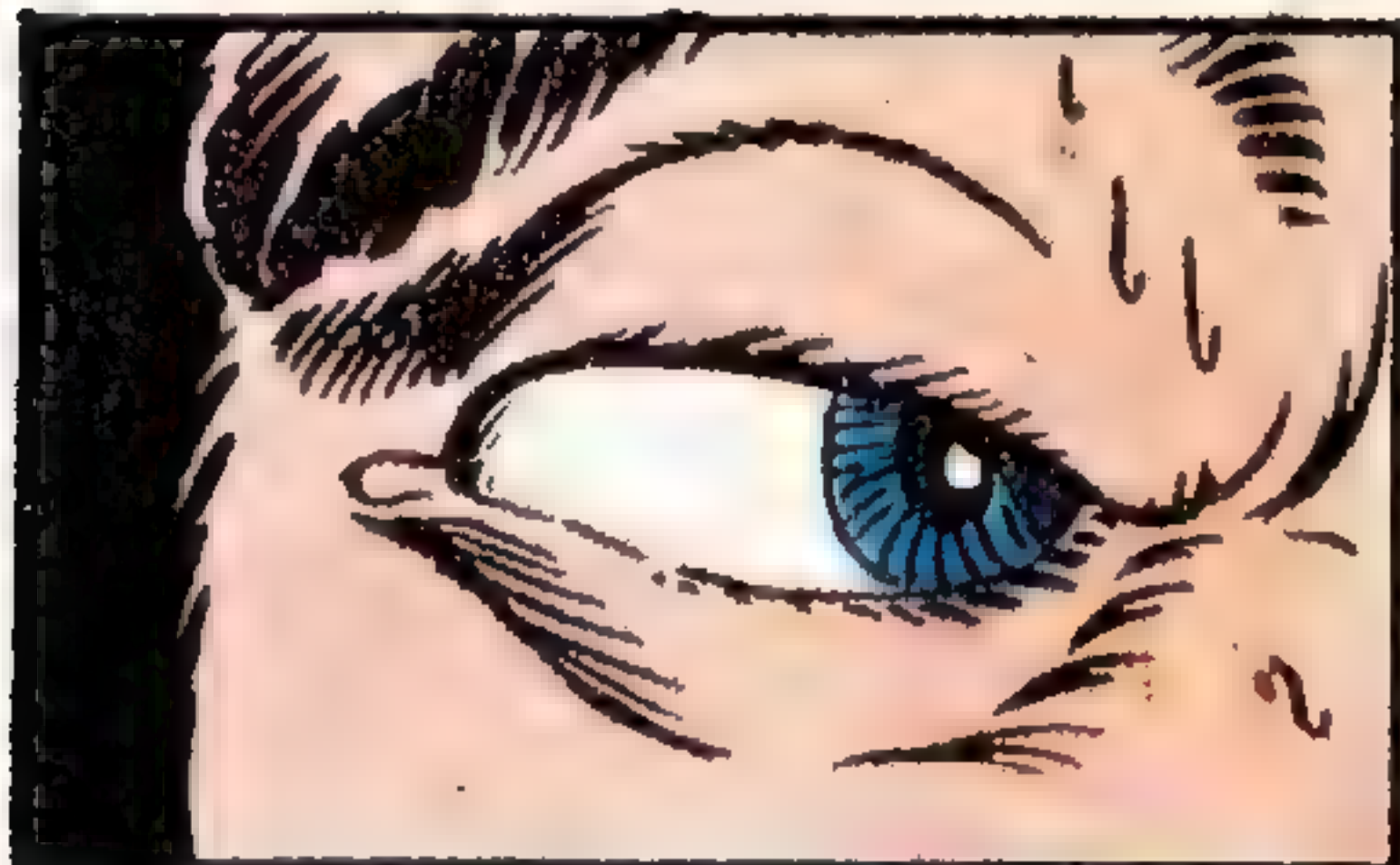
I'M NOT DREAMING! HE'S ACTUALLY THERE! AND THE VINE BRIDGE IS RESTORED! COULD HE... BE **KUBAR?**



END

LOOK DEEP INTO MY EYES

HIS STRANGE COMPULSION HAD SUBJECTED HIM TO MORE HUMILIATION THAN THE AVERAGE MORTAL COULD EVER BEAR! IF NOT FOR THE VOICES THAT ALWAYS WHISPERED TO HIM AT NIGHT WHEN HE WAS ALONE, HE WOULD HAVE GIVEN UP LONG AGO...



ALWAYS THE SAME HOARSE TANGLE OF UNINTELLIGIBLE ANGUISHED SOUND! NEVER A SINGLE CLEAR WORD! BUT YET HE KNEW...

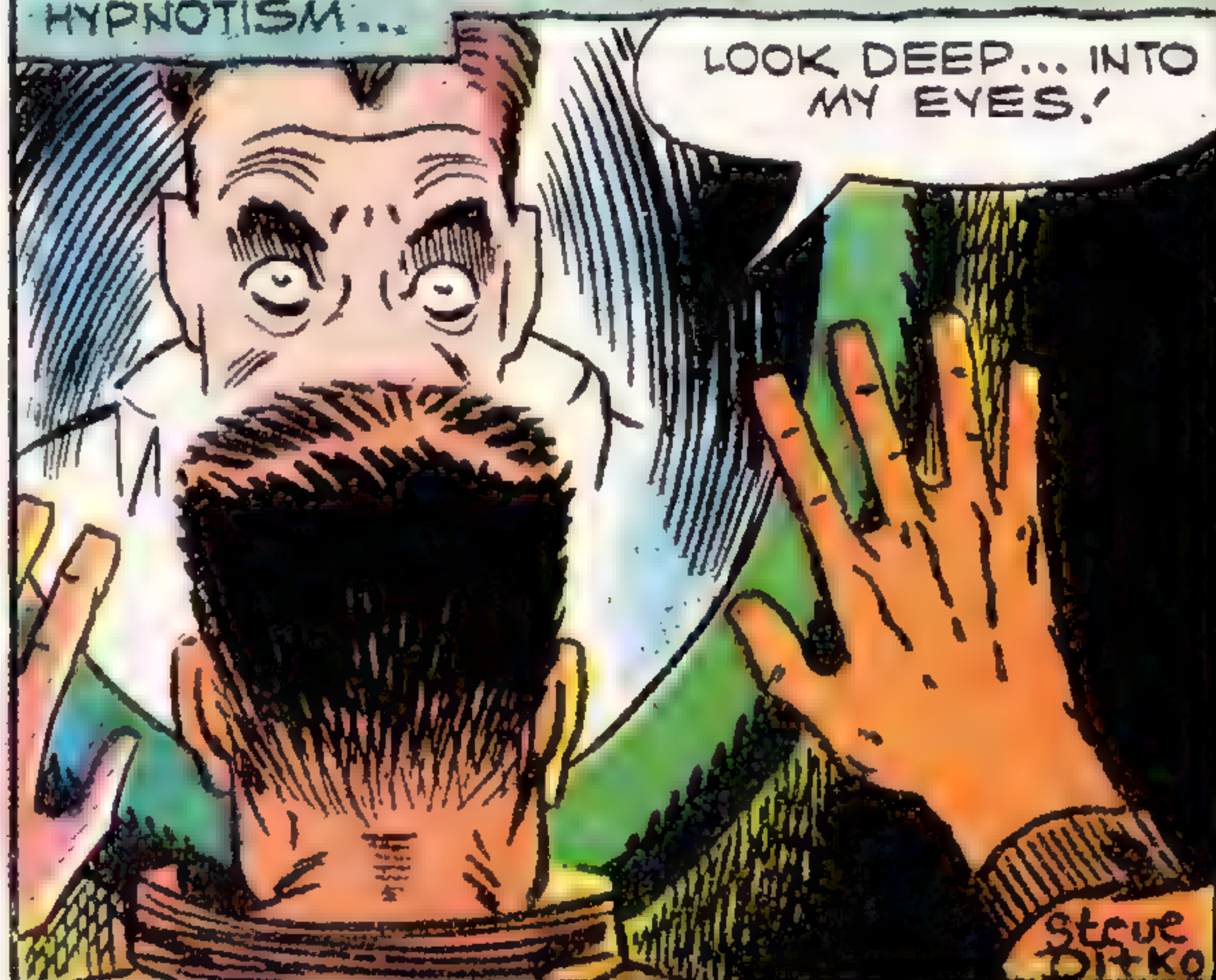


PSSST! PSSST! PSSST!

THEY'RE BEGGIN' ME... NOT TO GIVE UP!

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AND SO, DESPITE THE JEERS AND THE CATCALLS, HE KEPT TO THE COURSE SET FOR HIM BY THE STRANGE COMPULSION. HE KEPT STRIVING TO MASTER THE ART OF HYPNOTISM...

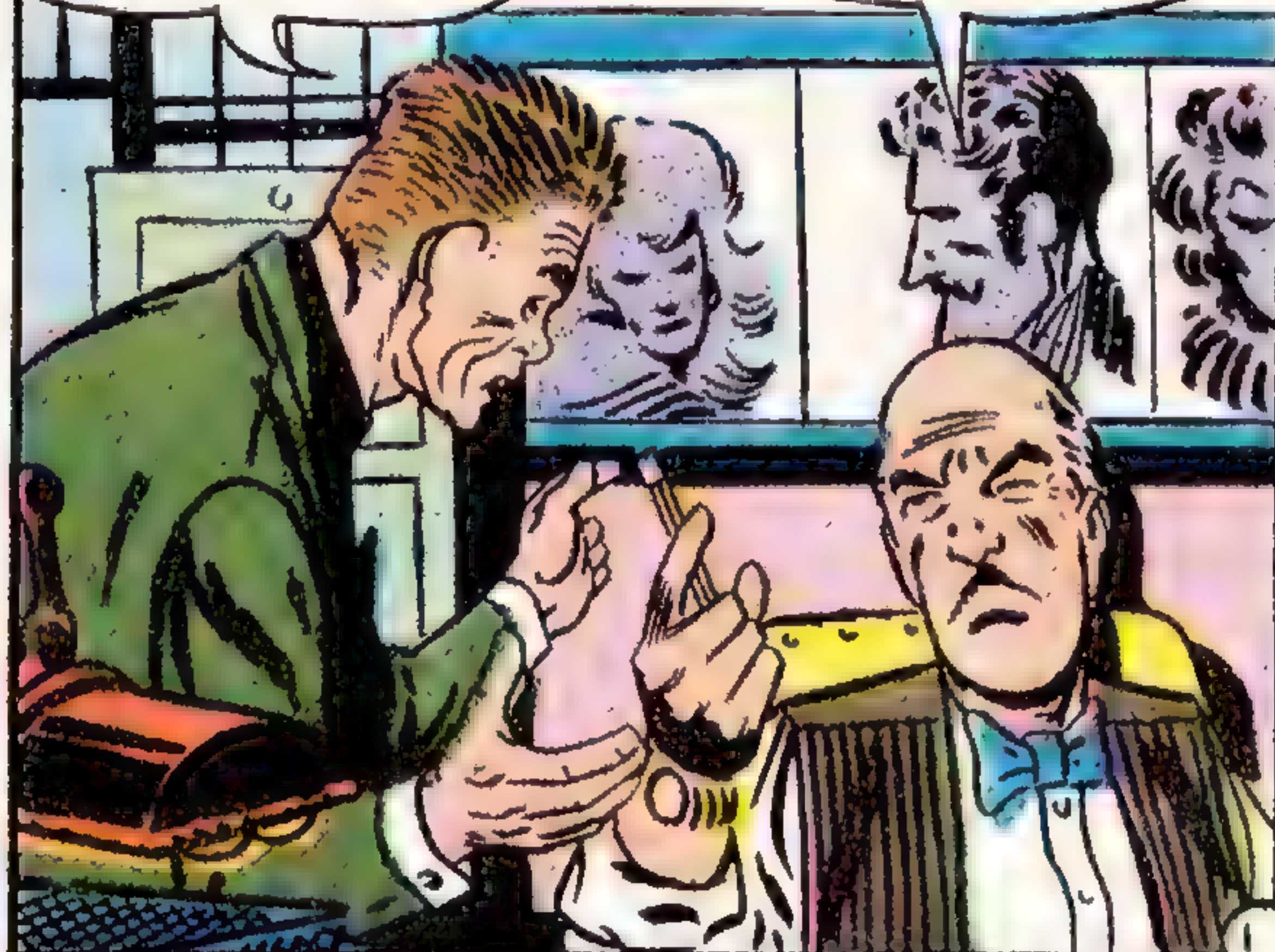


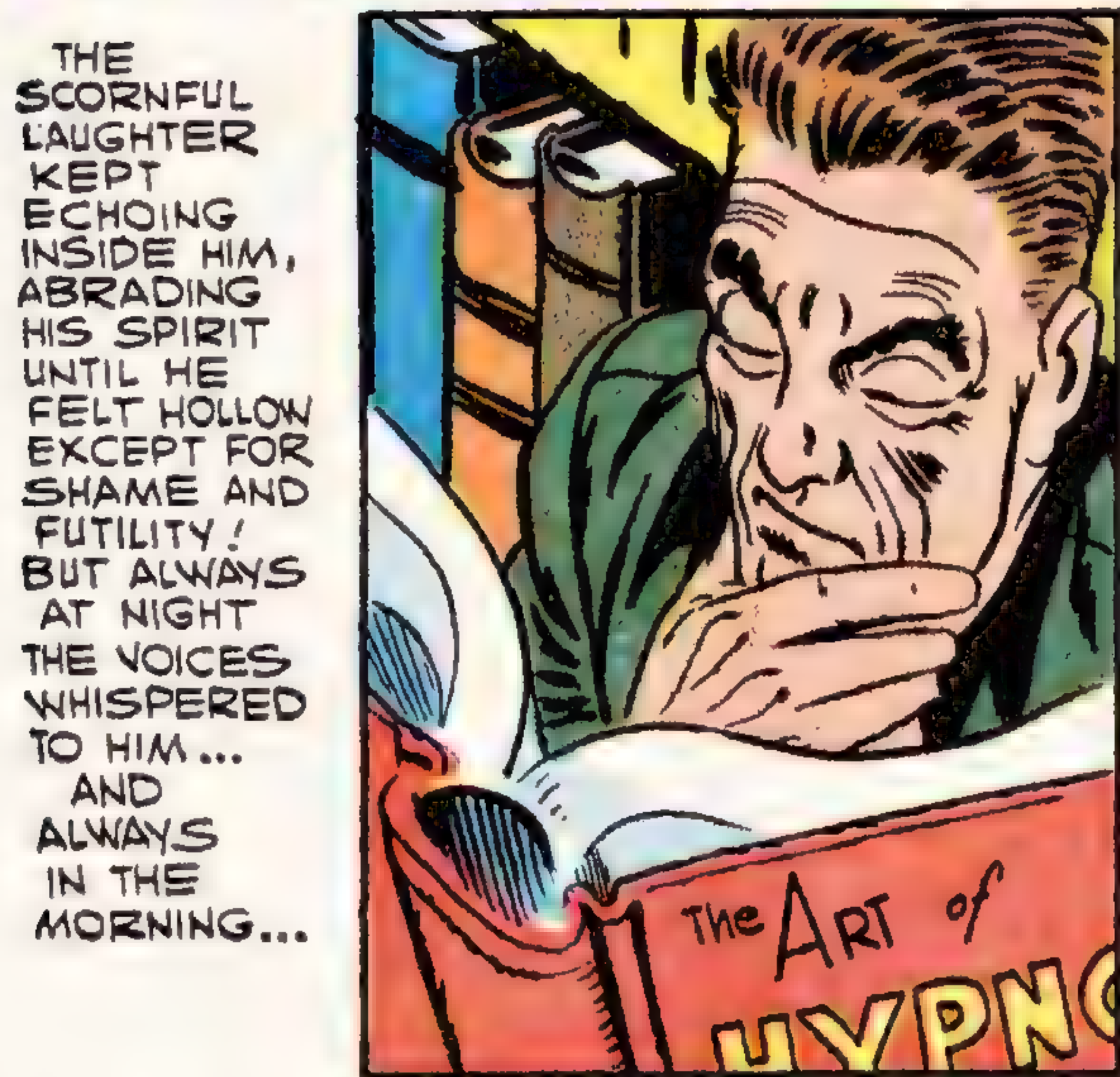
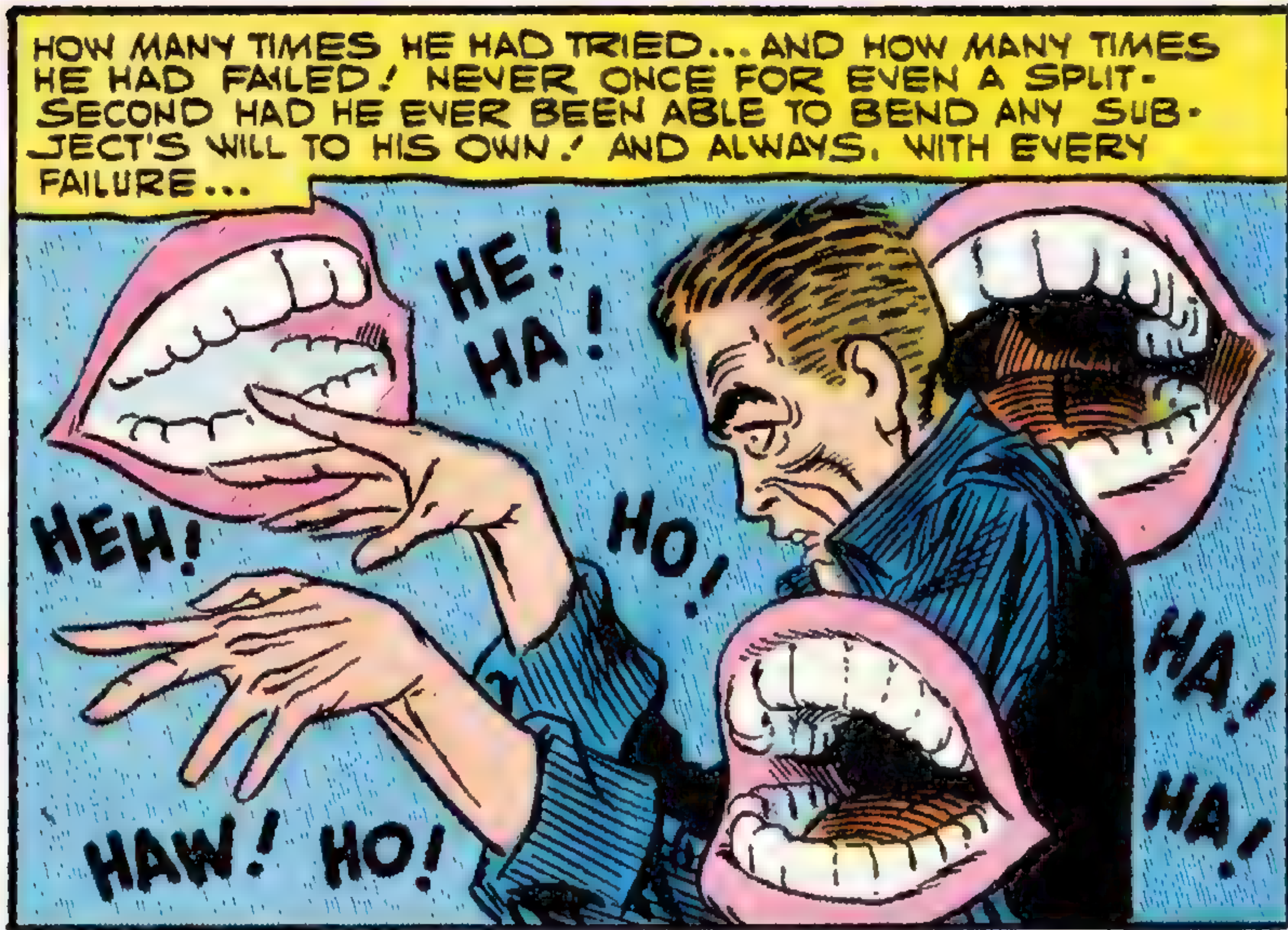
LOOK DEEP... INTO MY EYES!

Steve Ditko

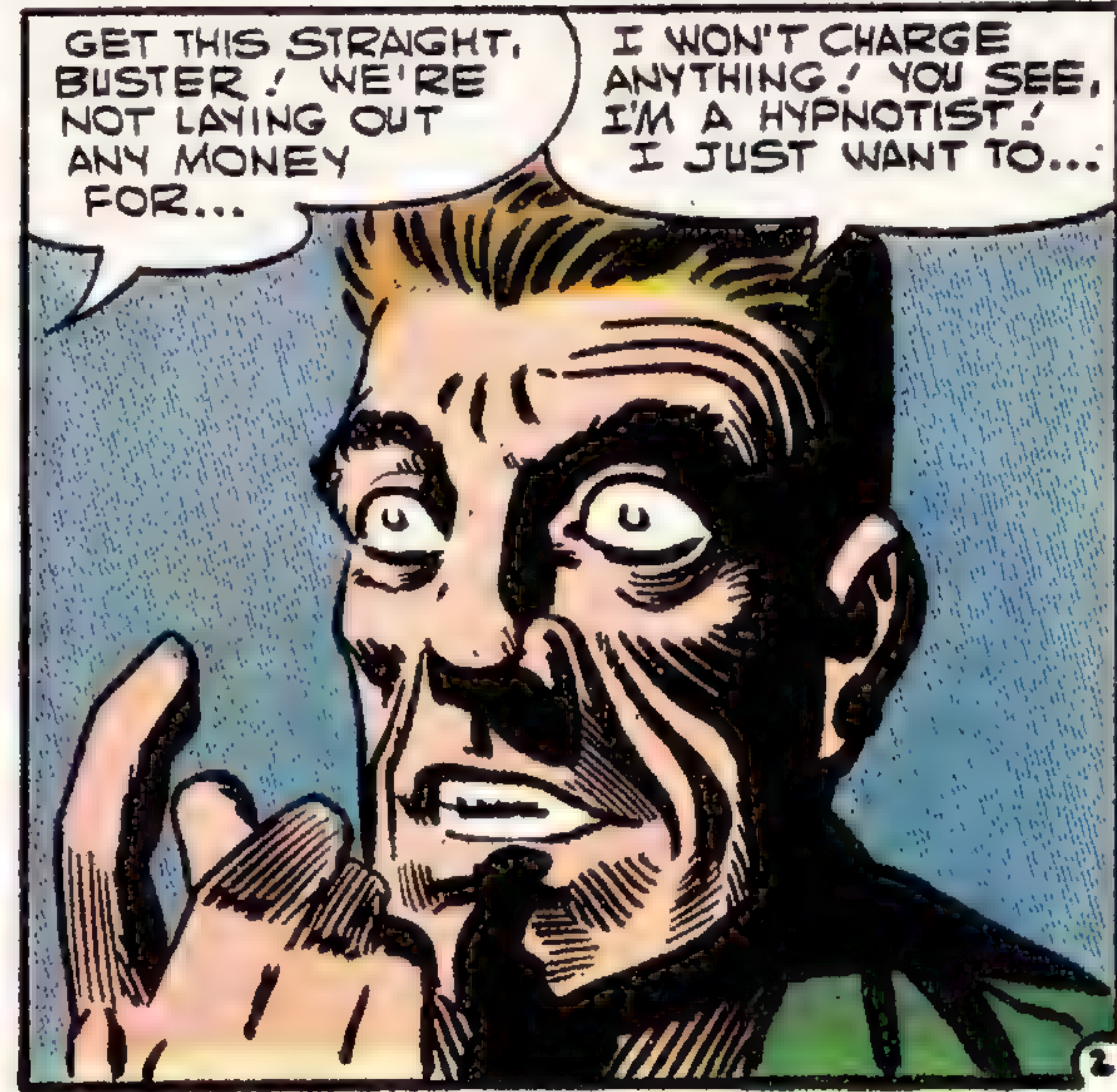
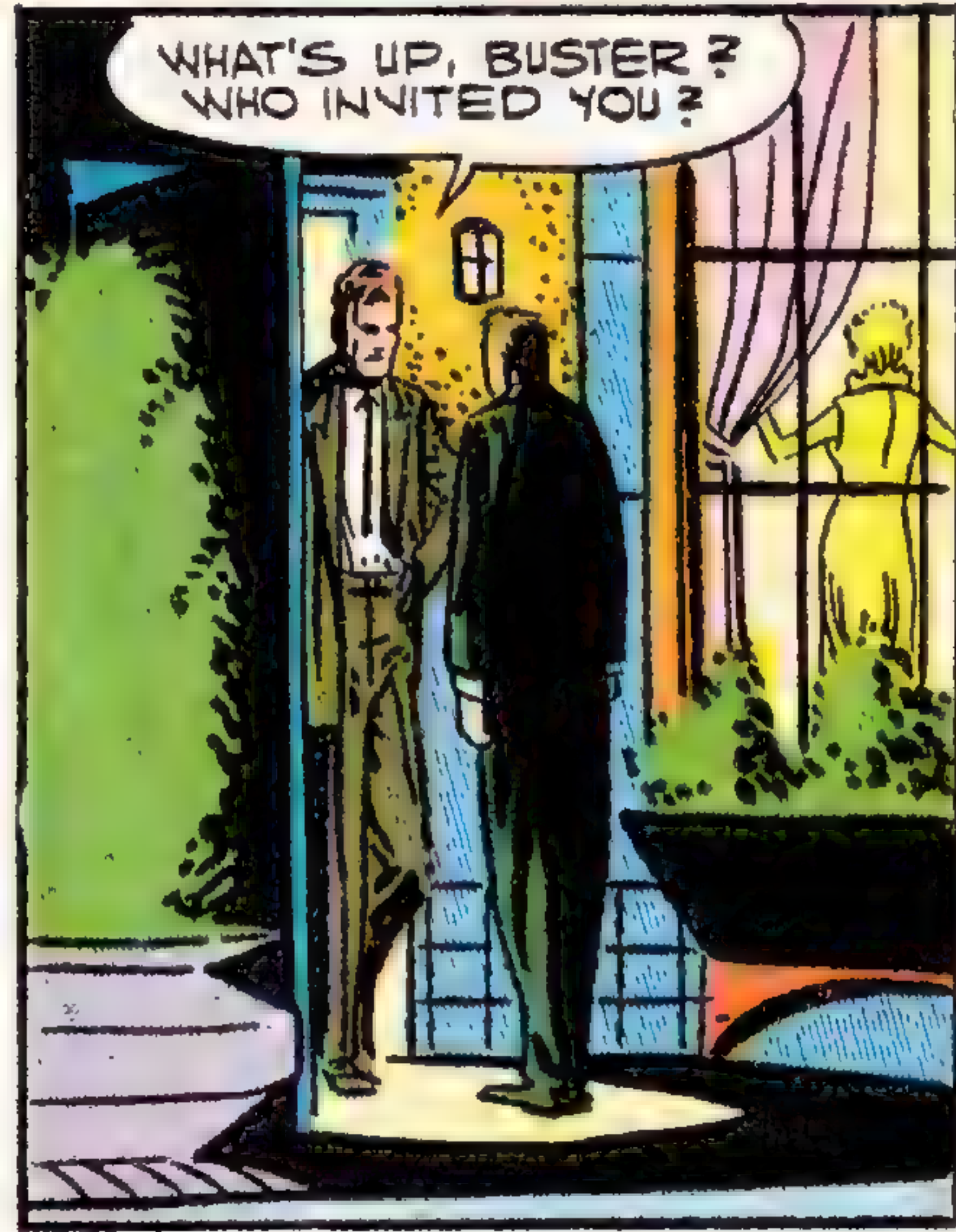
PLEASE GIVE ME ANOTHER CHANCE! I'M SURE I CAN HYPNOTIZE PEOPLE NOW!

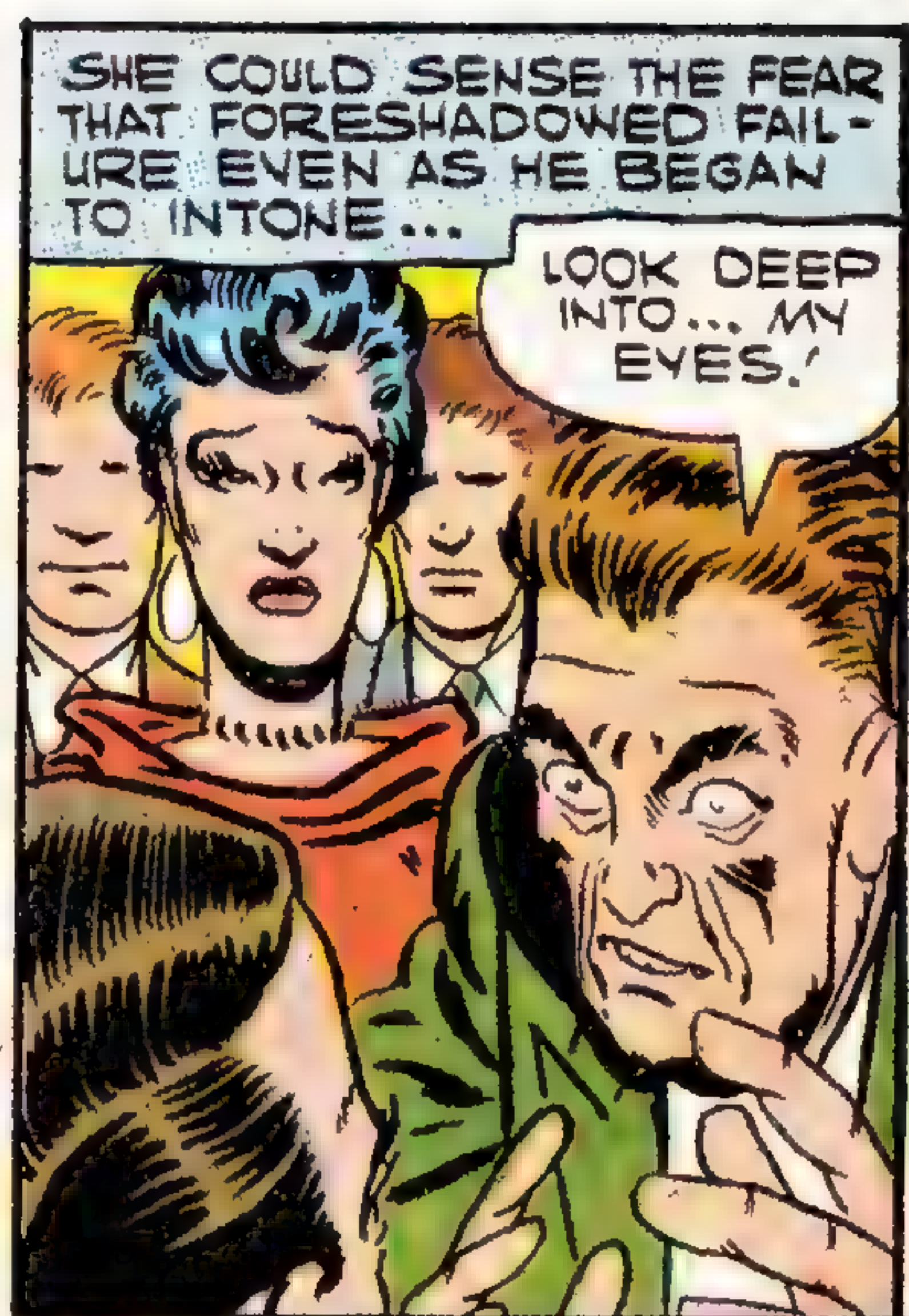
HMPF! THEN HYPNOTIZE YOURSELF INTO BELIEVING I GAVE YOU ONE!



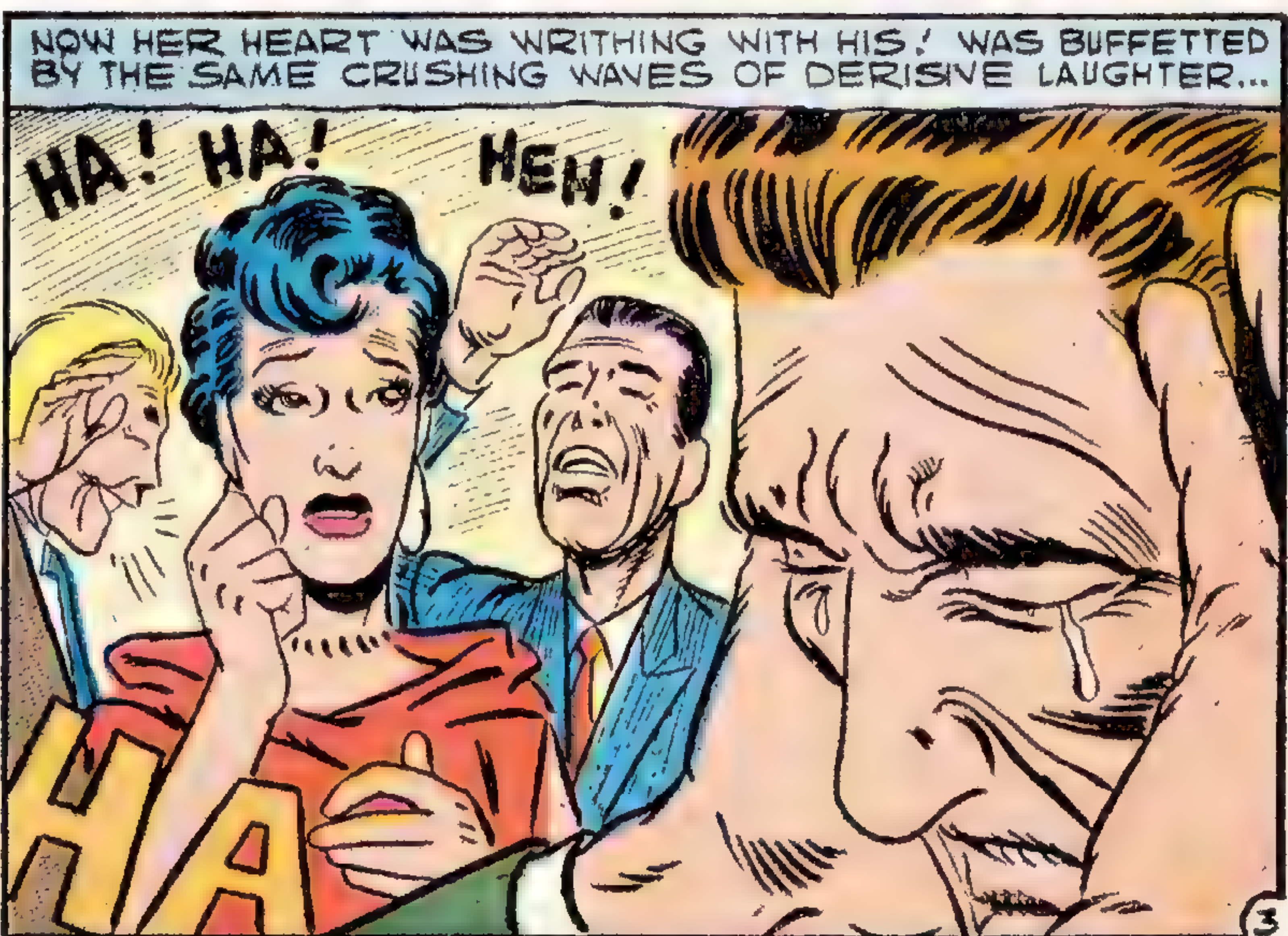
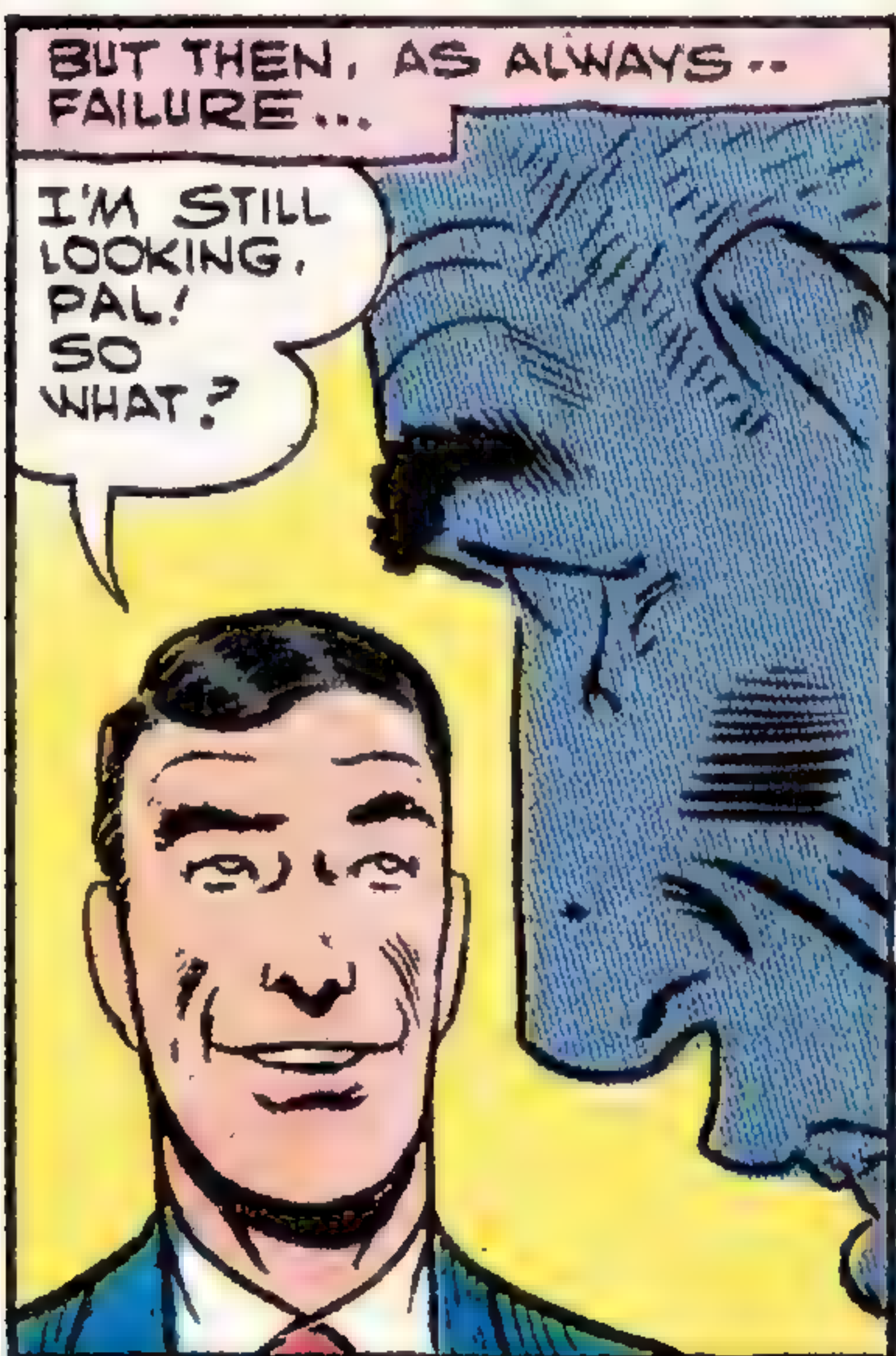
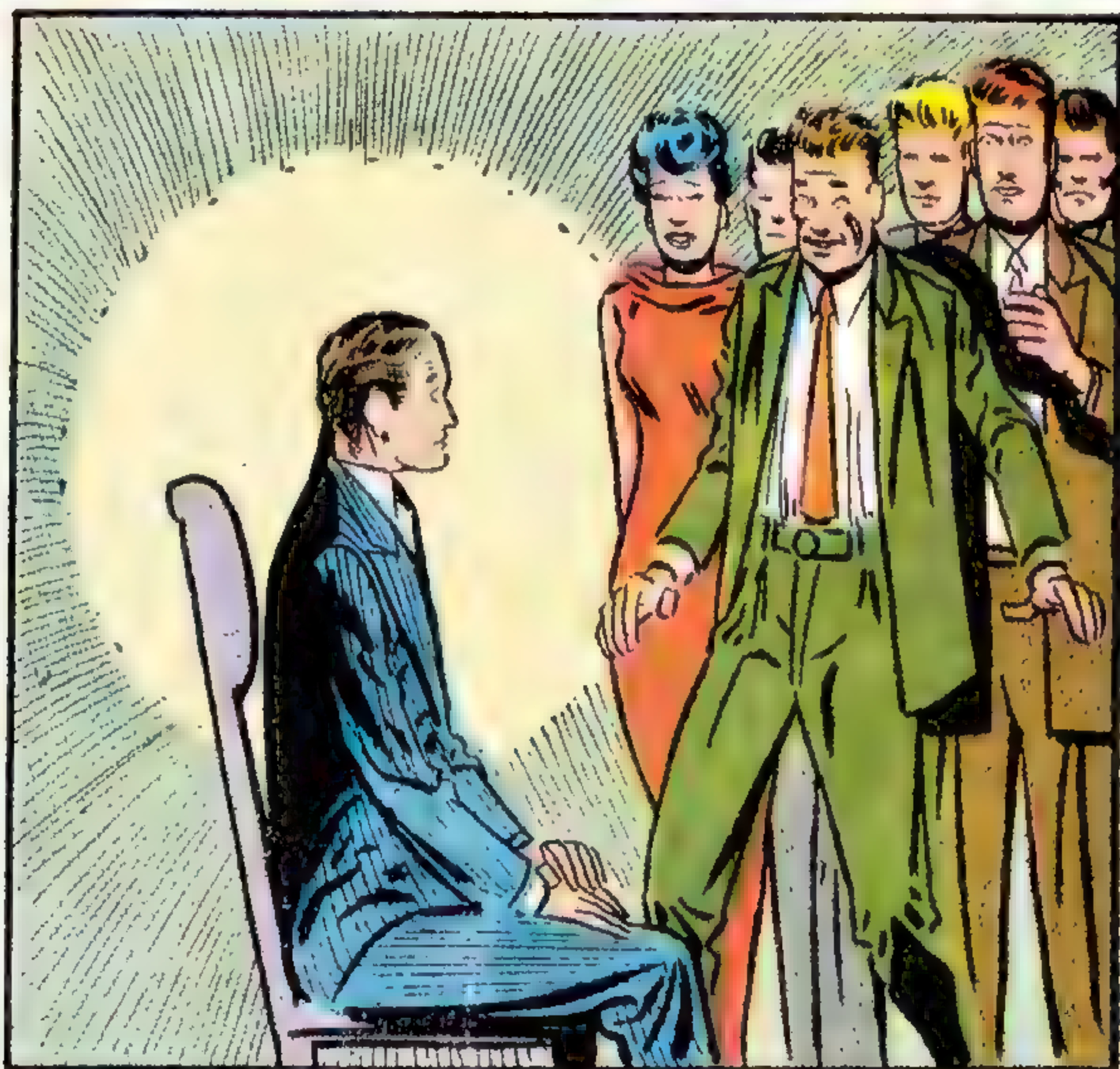


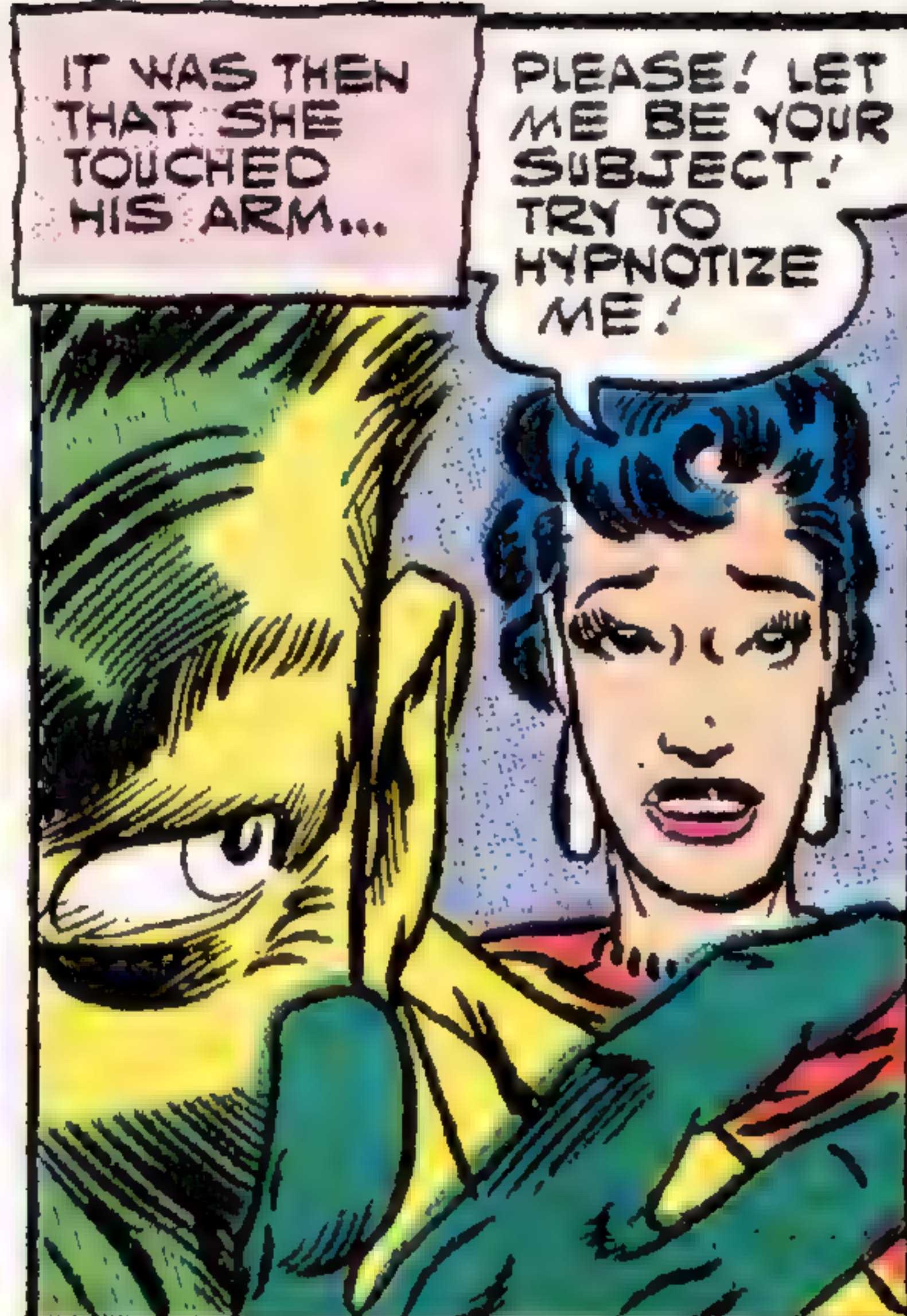
BY NOW HE WAS BLACKBALLED BY EVERY THEATRICAL AGENT IN THE BIG CITY! BUT HE HAD TO KEEP TRYING! HE DIDN'T KNOW WHY -- BUT HE HAD TO...



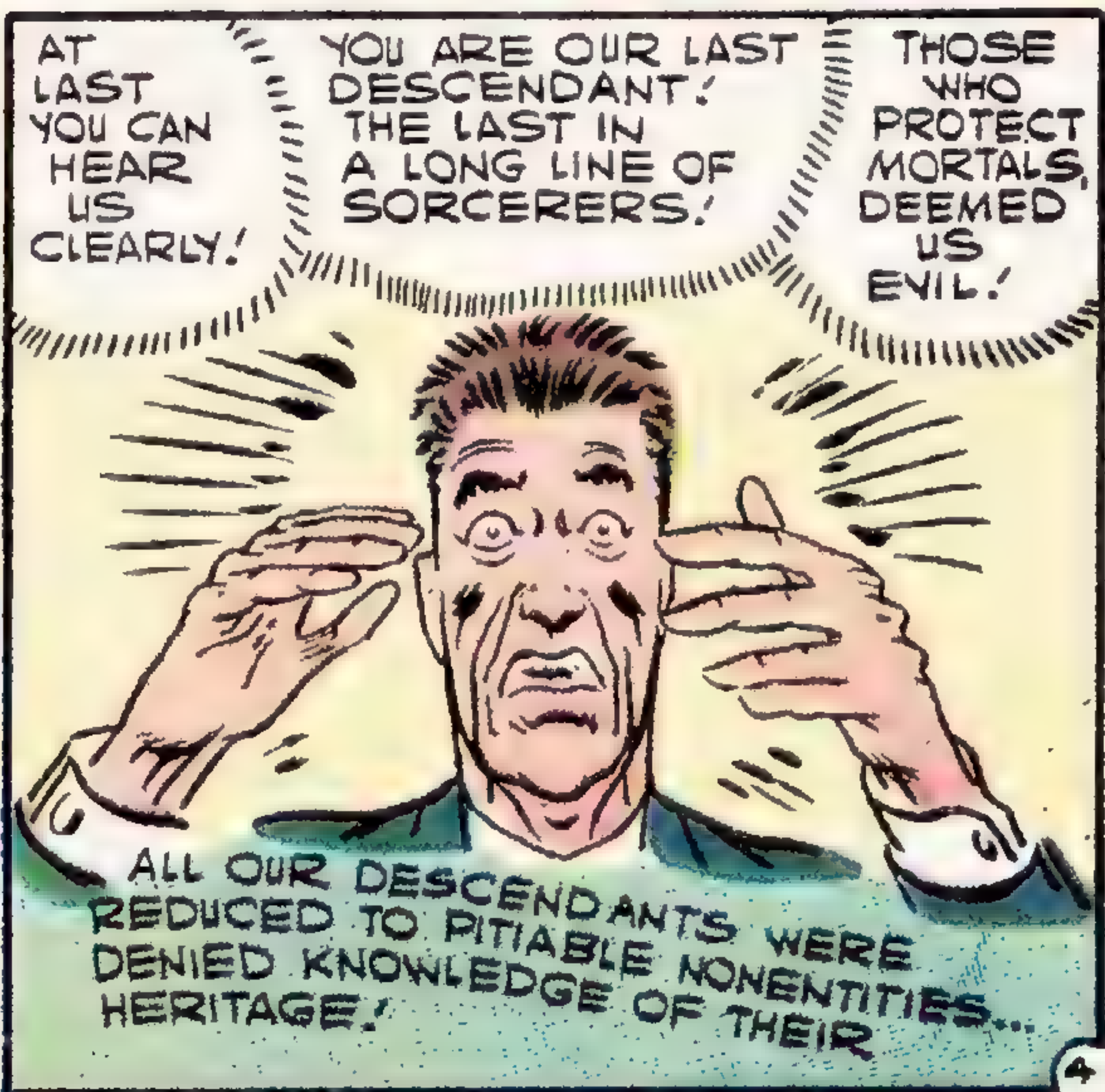


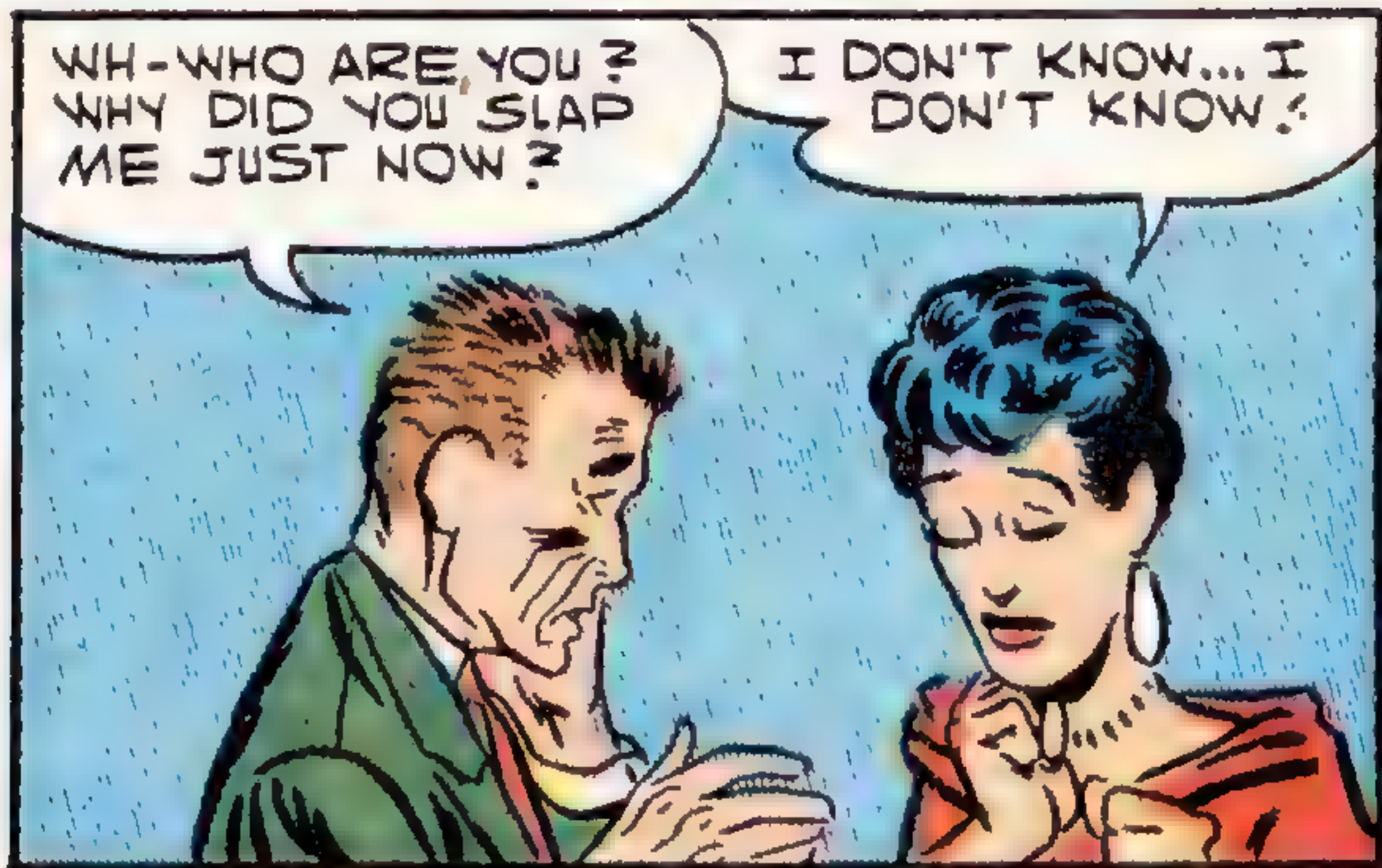
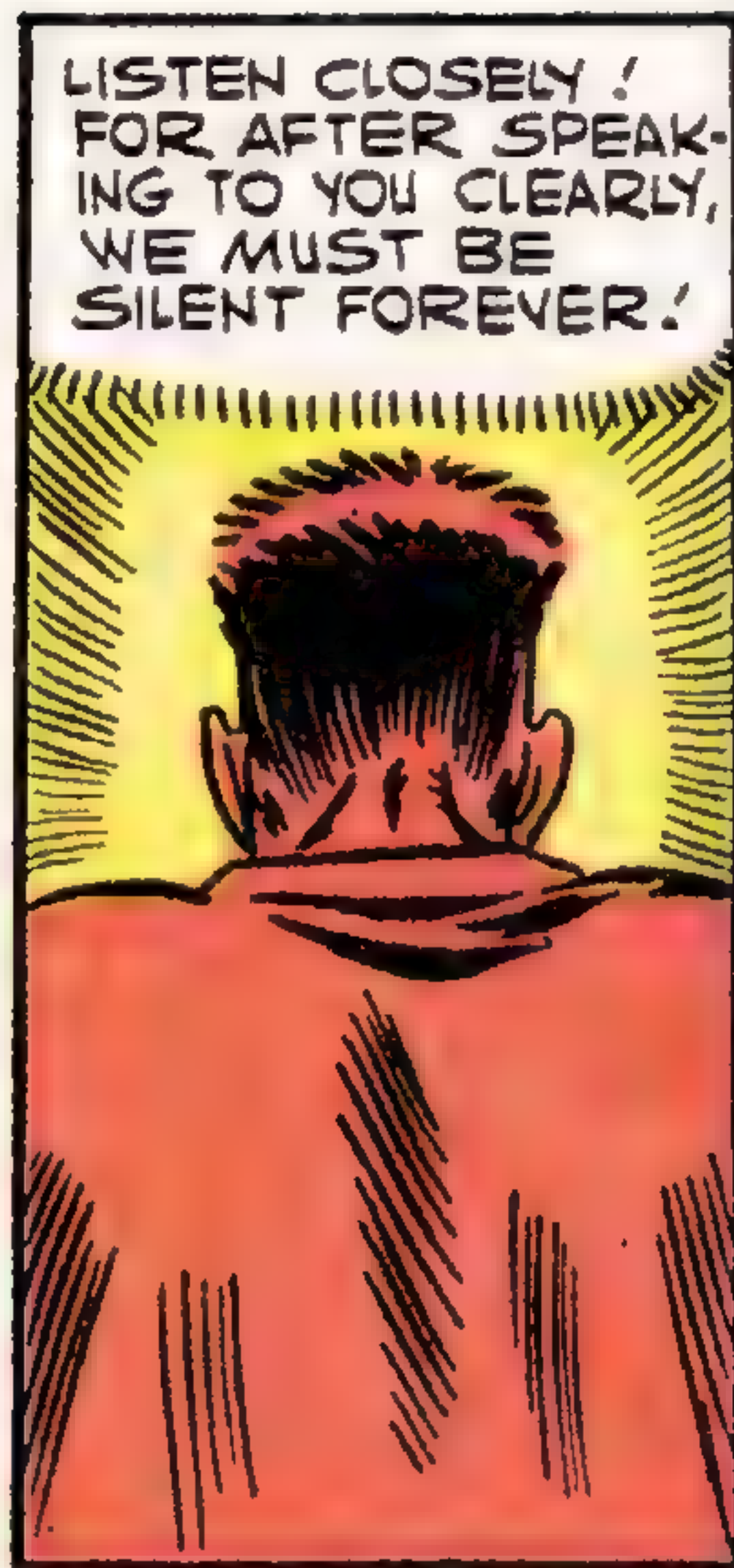
THE DESPERATE SPASMS OF DESPAIR AS HE KEPT TRYING TO DOMINATE THE SUBJECT'S WILL...



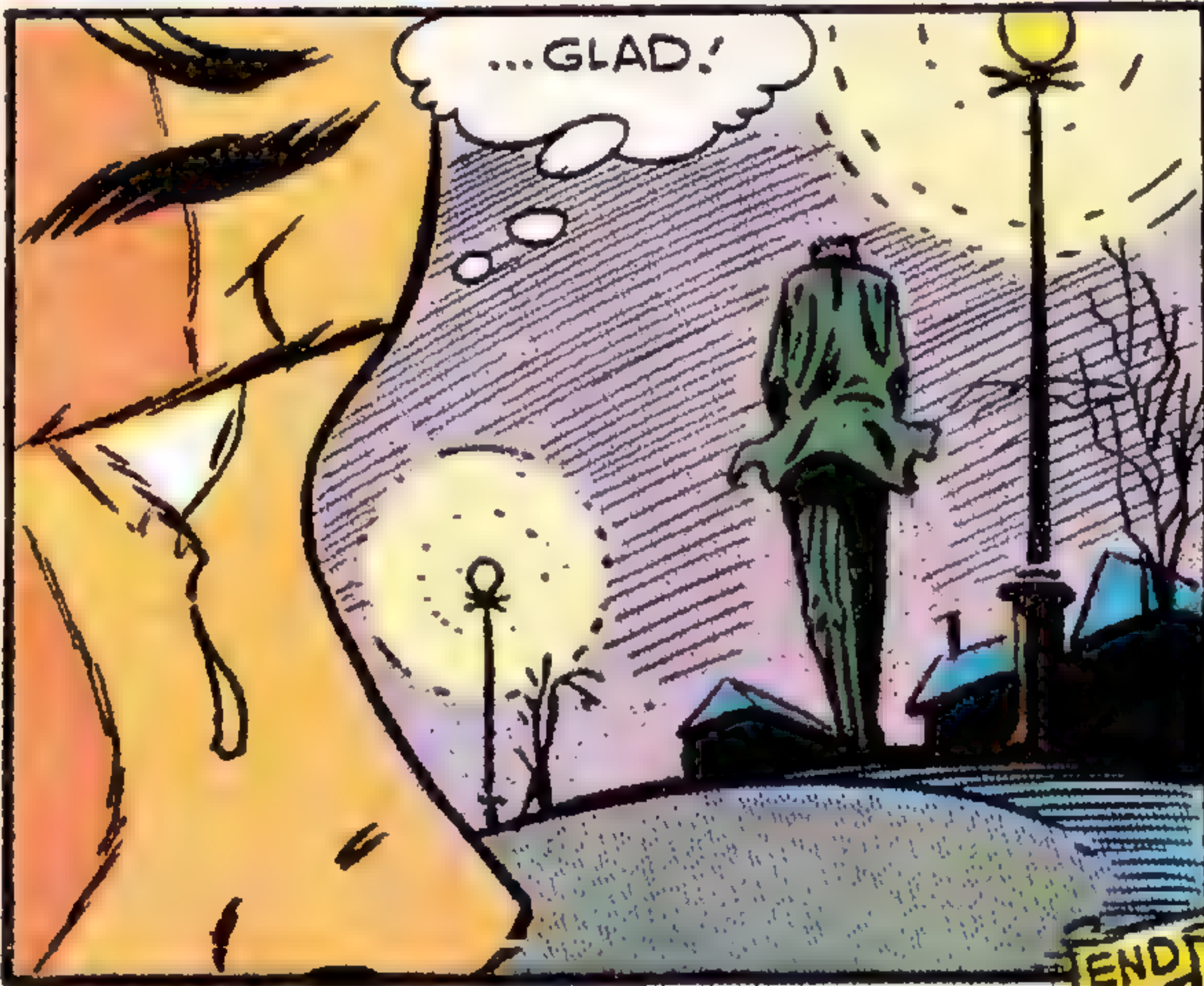
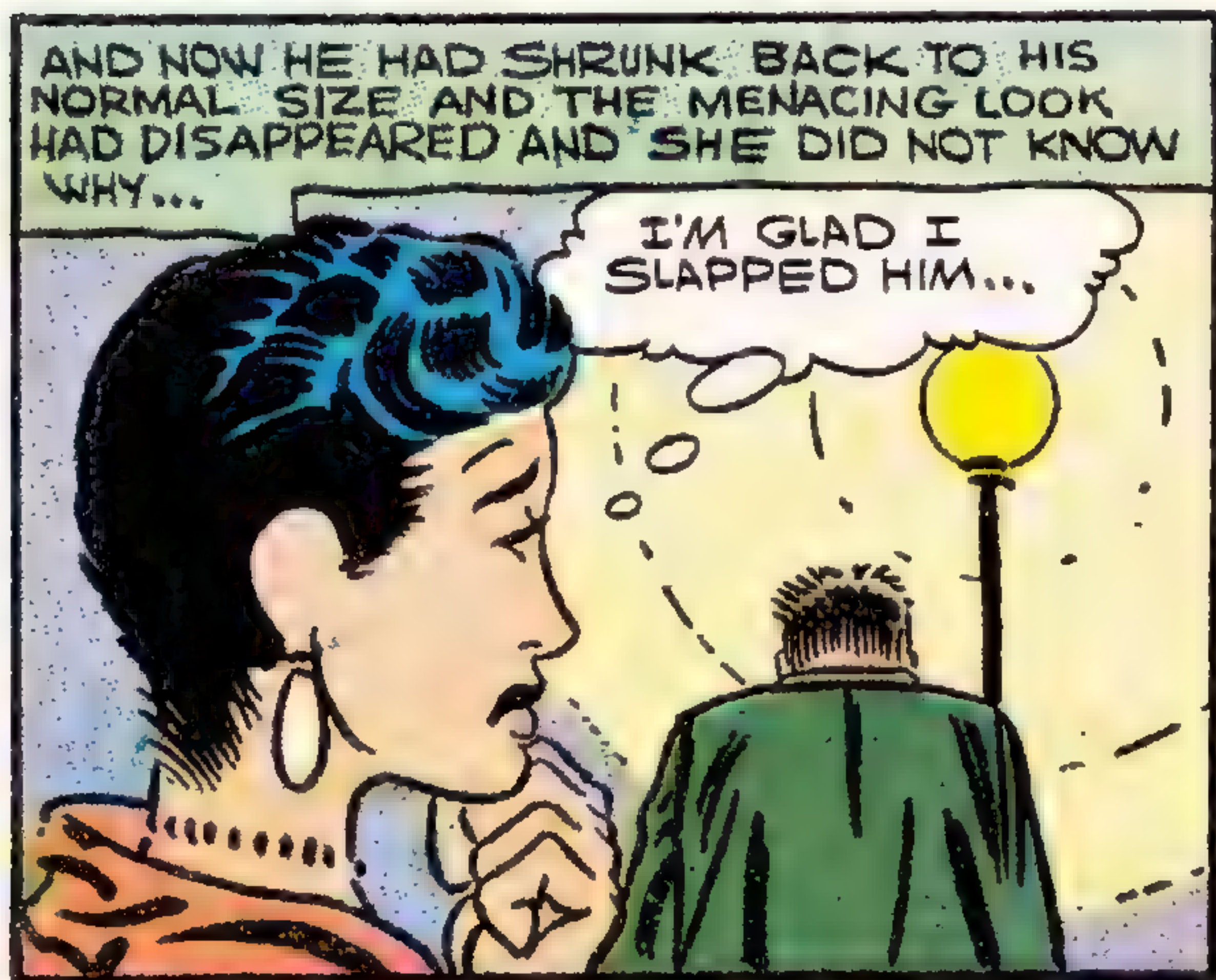
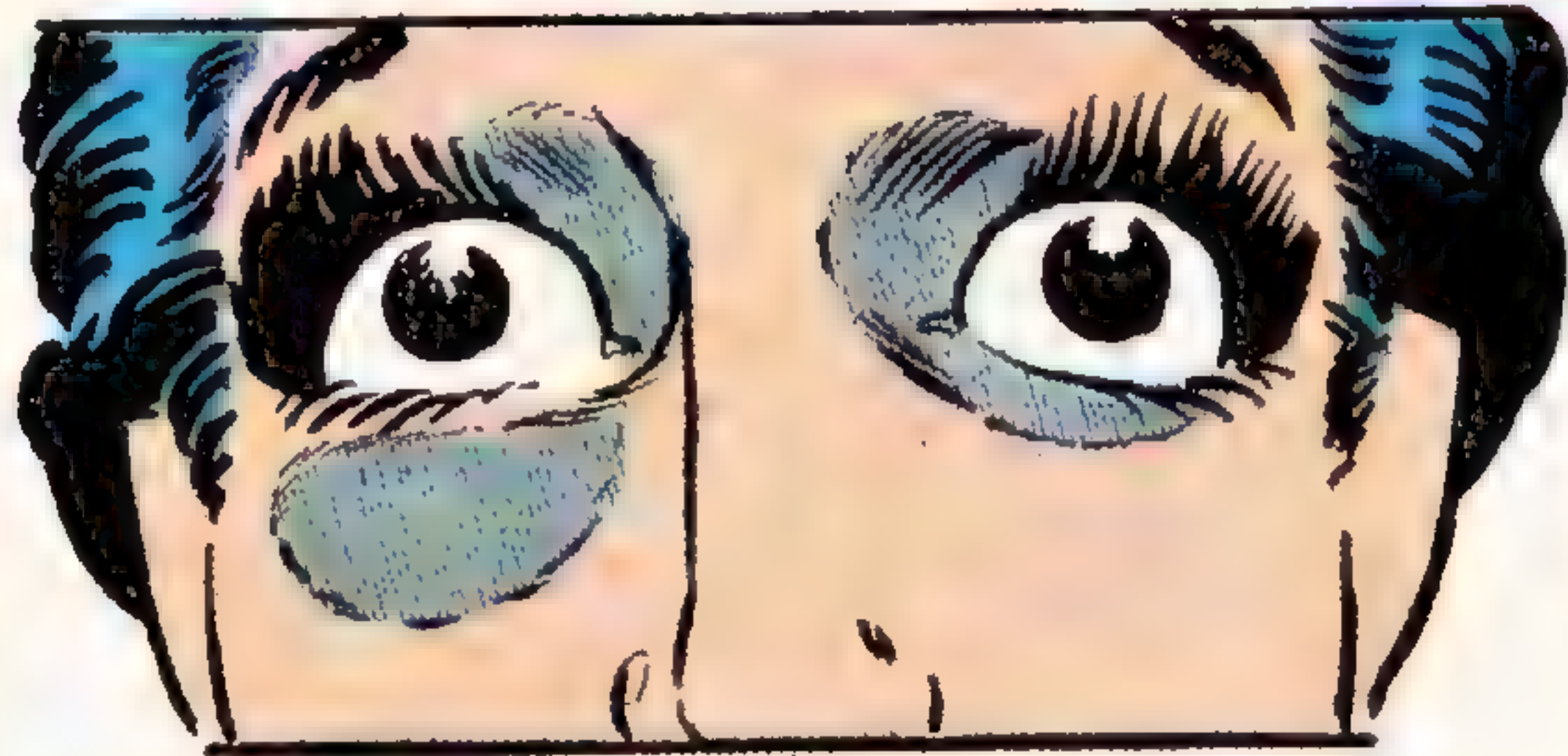


HE WAS STILL STARING WITH DISBELIEF, WHEN FOR THE FIRST TIME THE VOICES THAT HAD ALWAYS WHISPERED INCHOATELY AND ONLY WHEN HE WAS ALONE AT NIGHT, CRIED OUT WITH SAVAGE CLARITY IN HIS INNER EAR...





ALL SHE KNEW WAS THAT SHE HAD PRETENDED ENTERING A TRANCE OUT OF SYMPATHY FOR A PITIFUL UNDERDOG... TO TRY TO BOLSTER A FAILURE'S SAGGING SELF-FAITH! BUT THEN SHE HAD SEEN INCHES ADDED INEXPPLICABLY TO HIS HEIGHT IN A MATTER OF SECONDS. HAD SEEN HIS SHABBY JACKET SWELLING WITH NEW-BORN MUSCLES! HAD SEEN HIS FACE'S LINEAMENTS TAKE ON A MENACING EVIL CAST! AND HER HAND SNAKED OUT...





Tales of the Mysterious Traveler

TALES OF THE

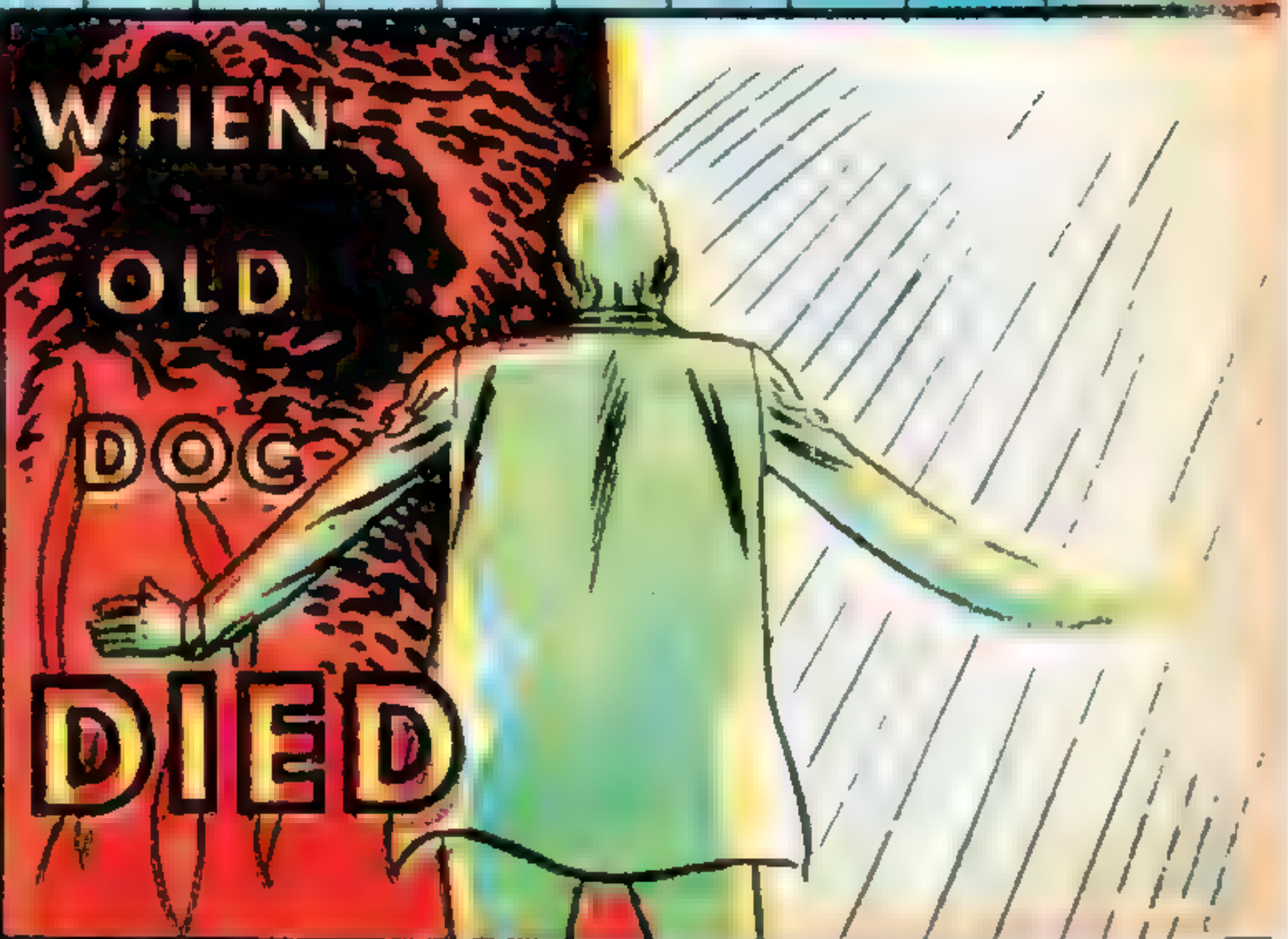
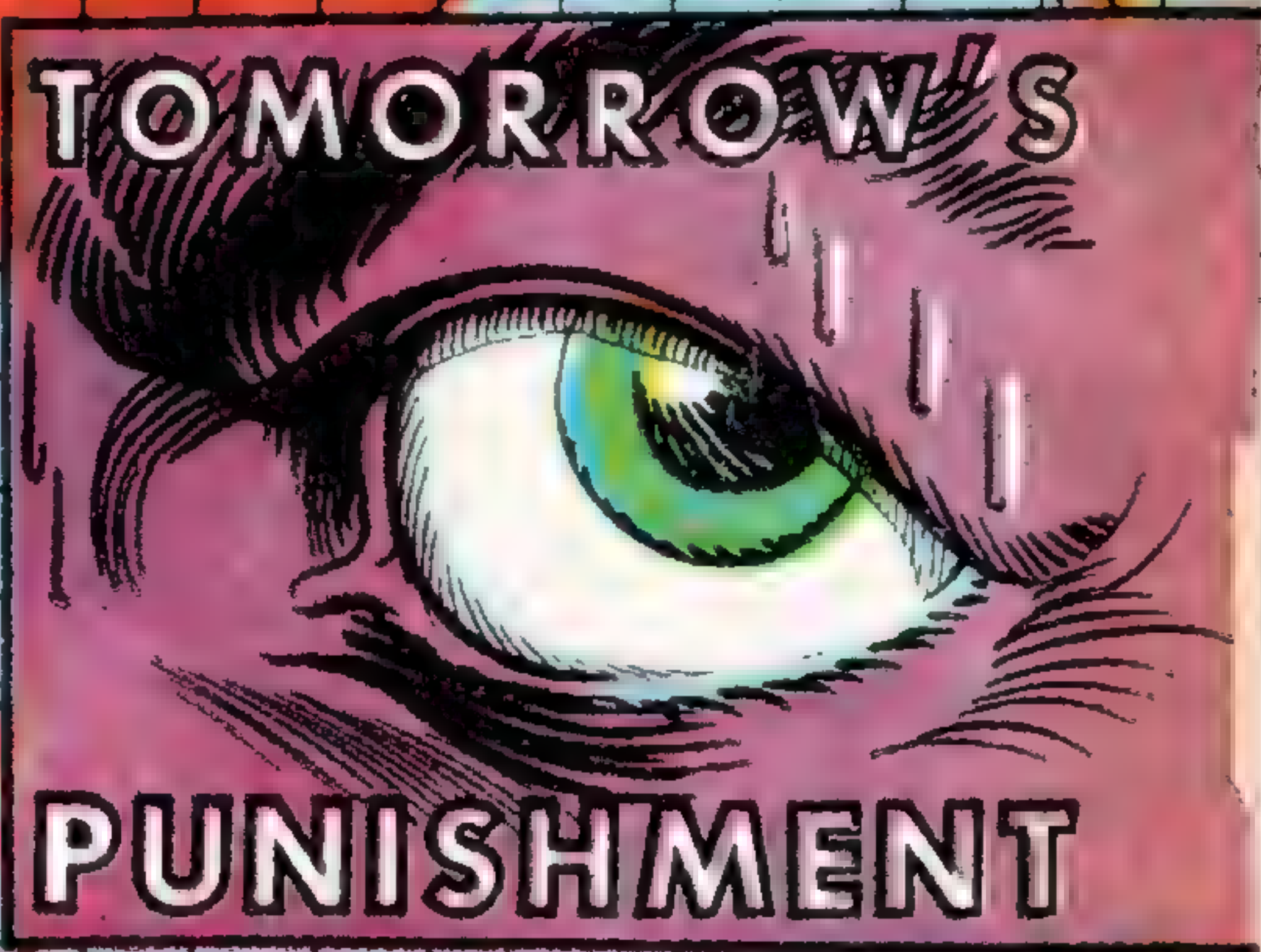
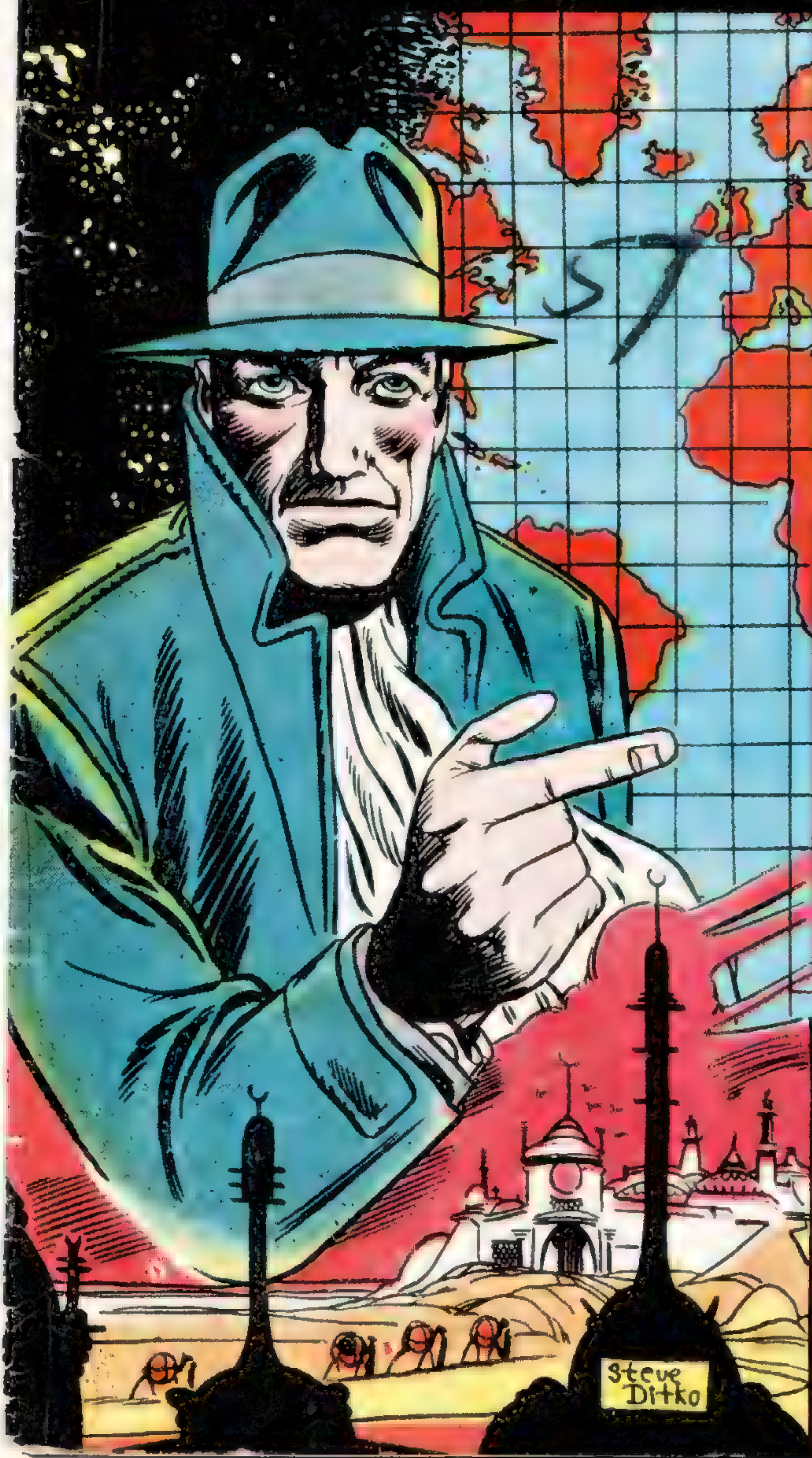
APPROVED
BY THE
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AUTHORITY

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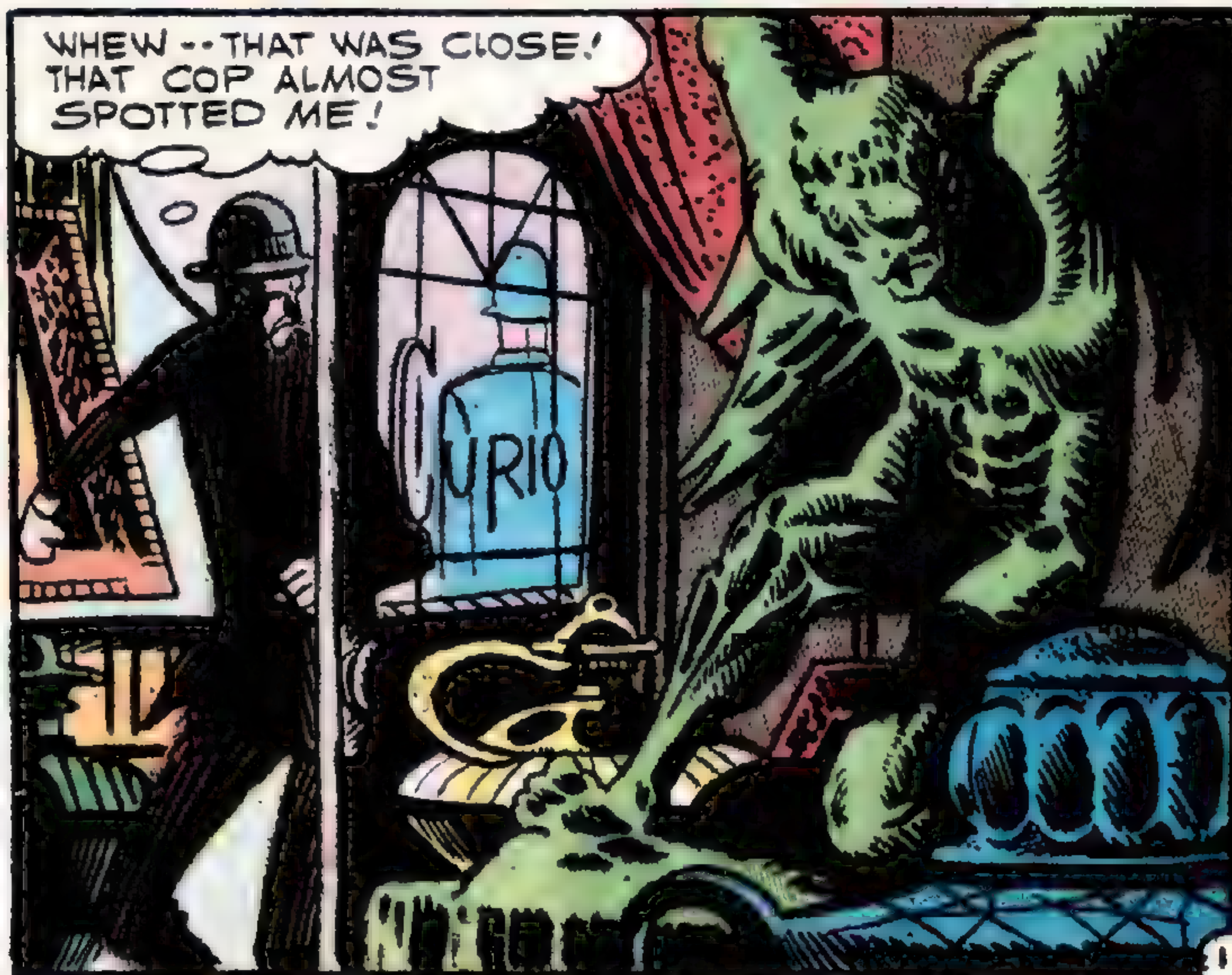
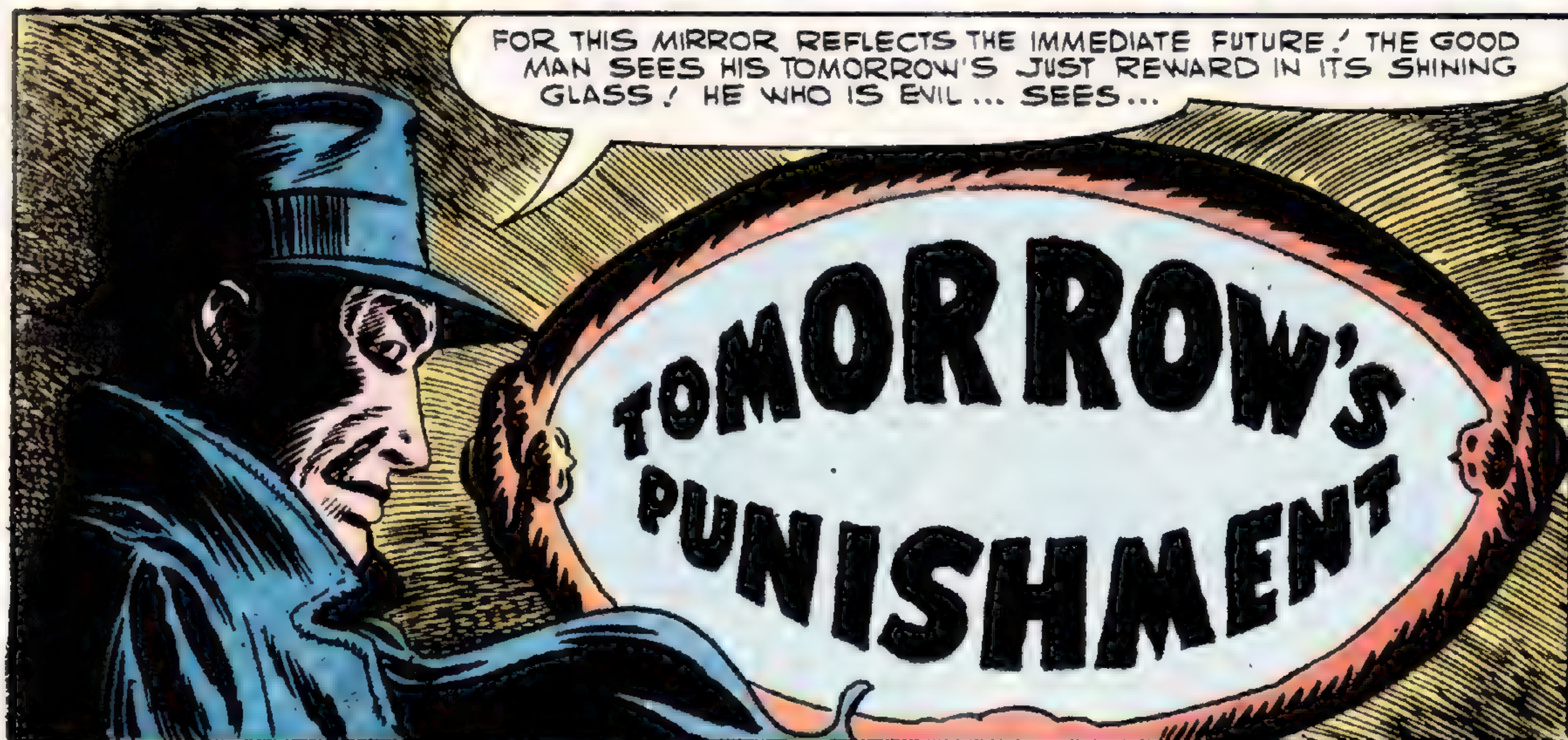
MYSTERIOUS TRAVELER

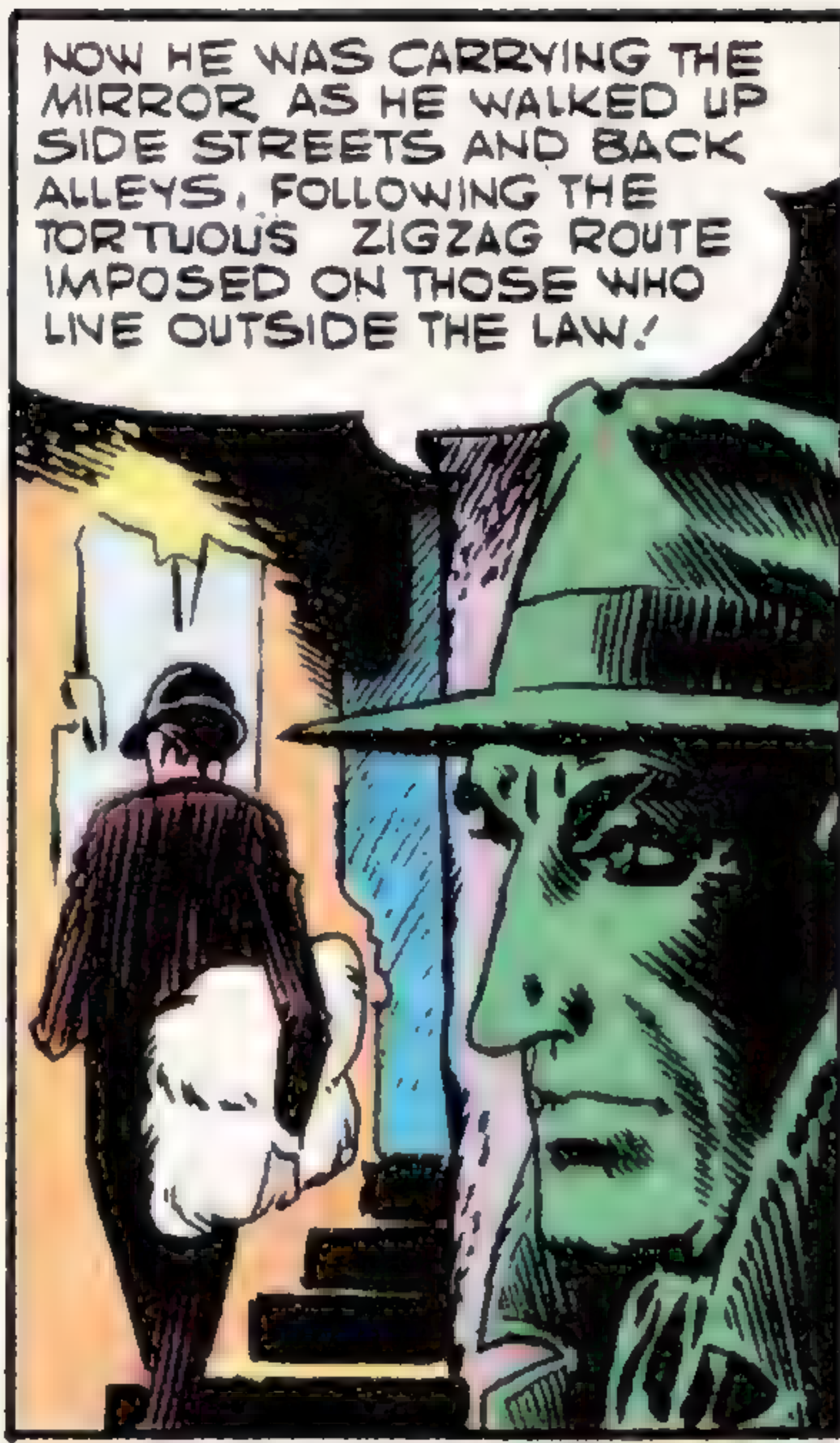
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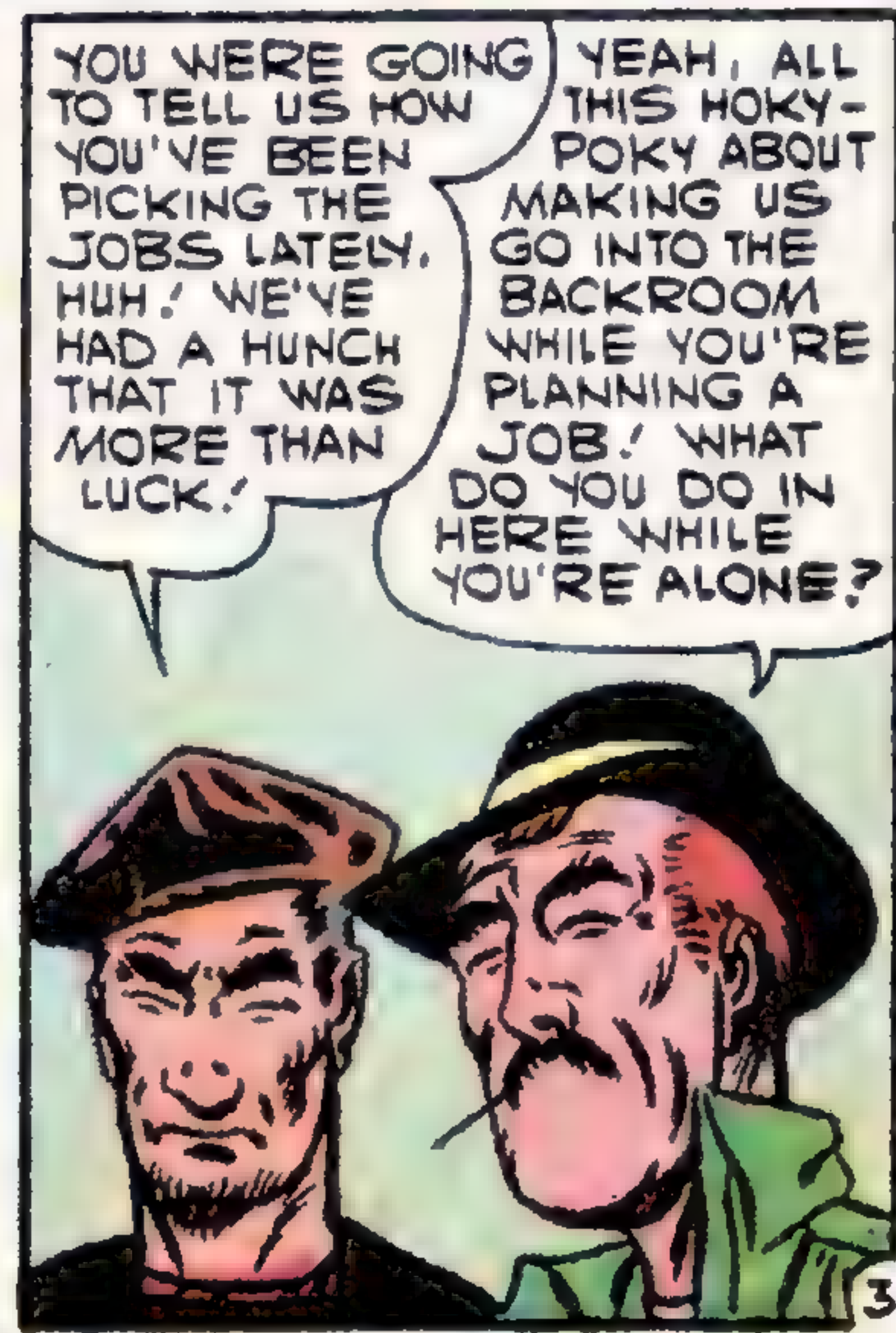
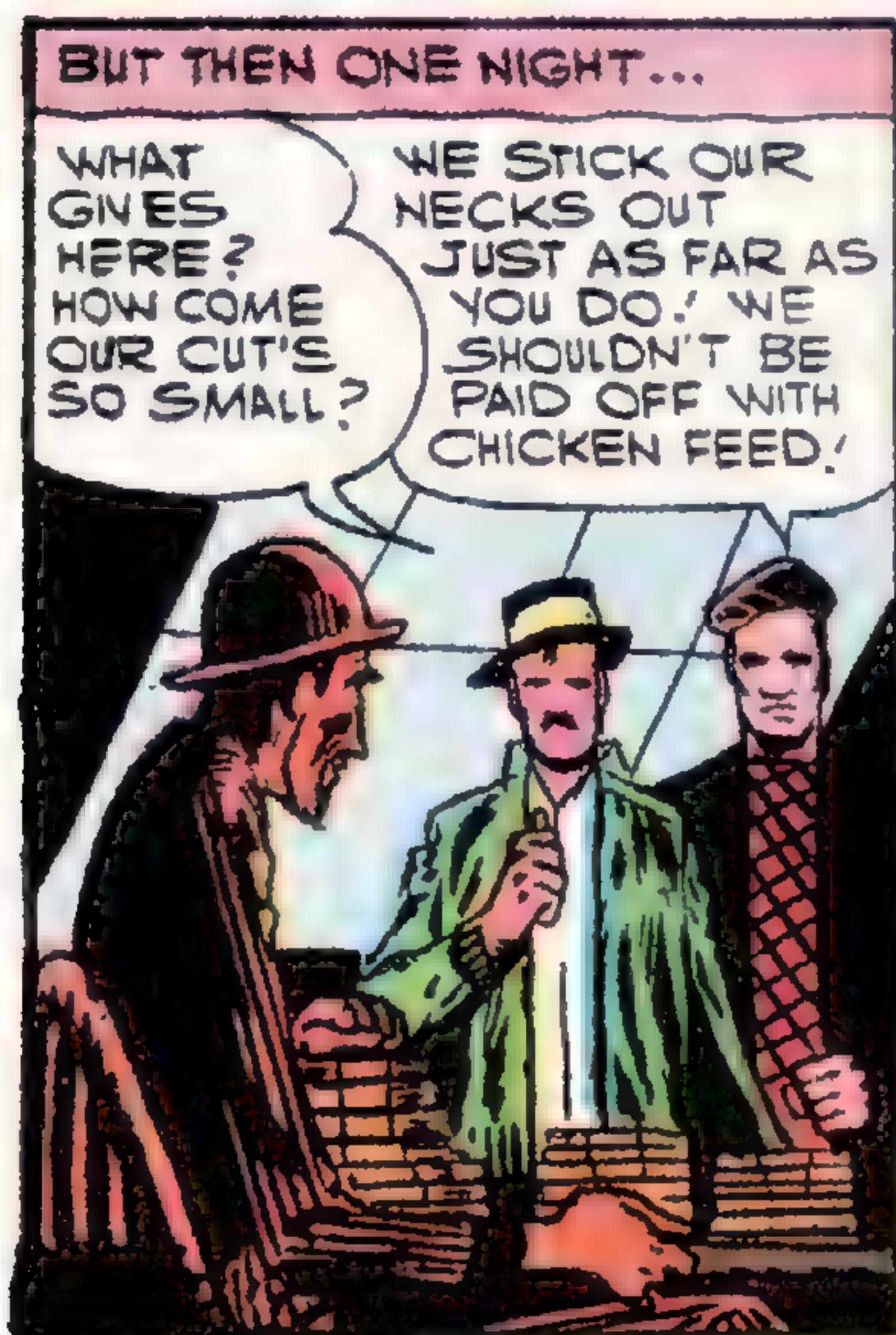
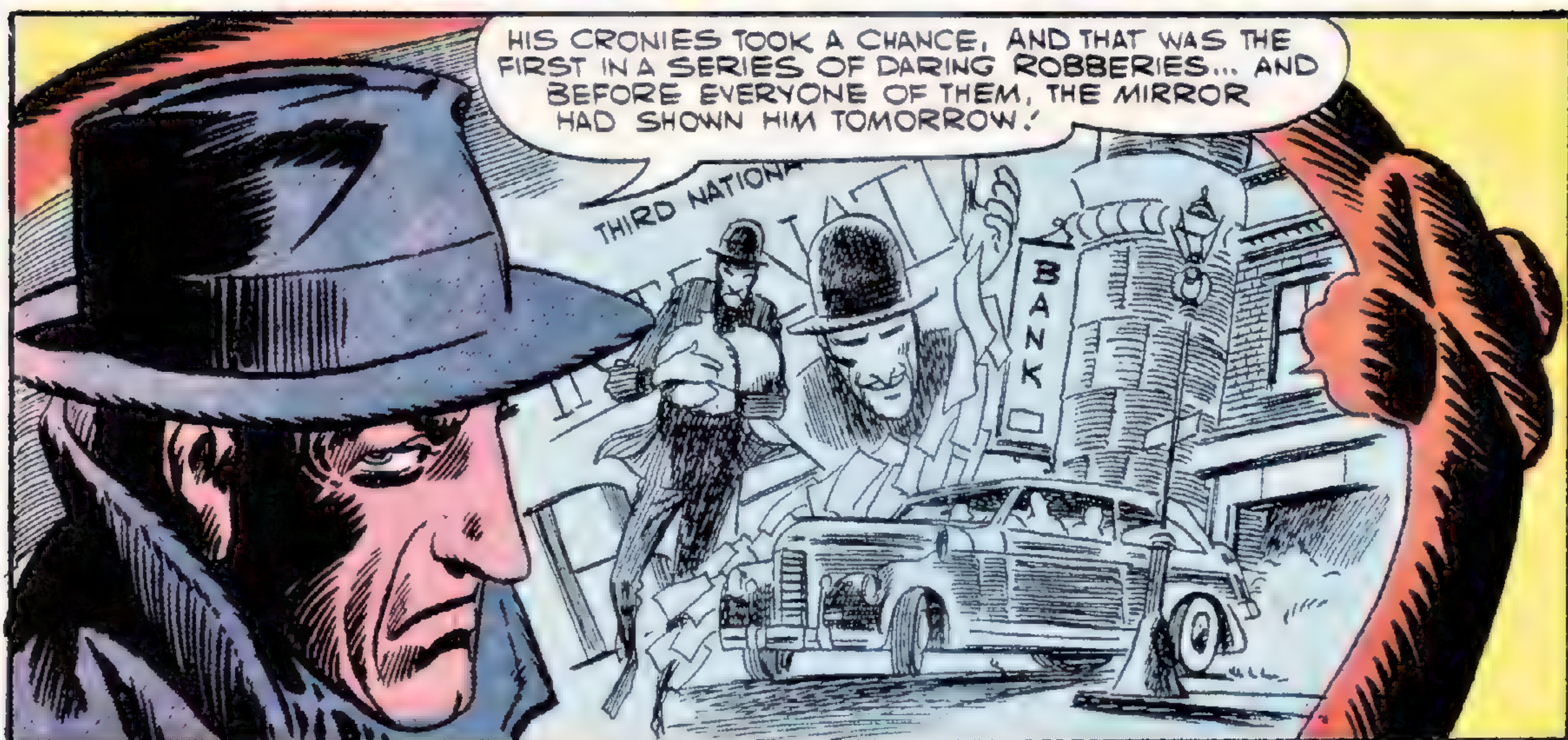
A CHARLTON PUBLICATION

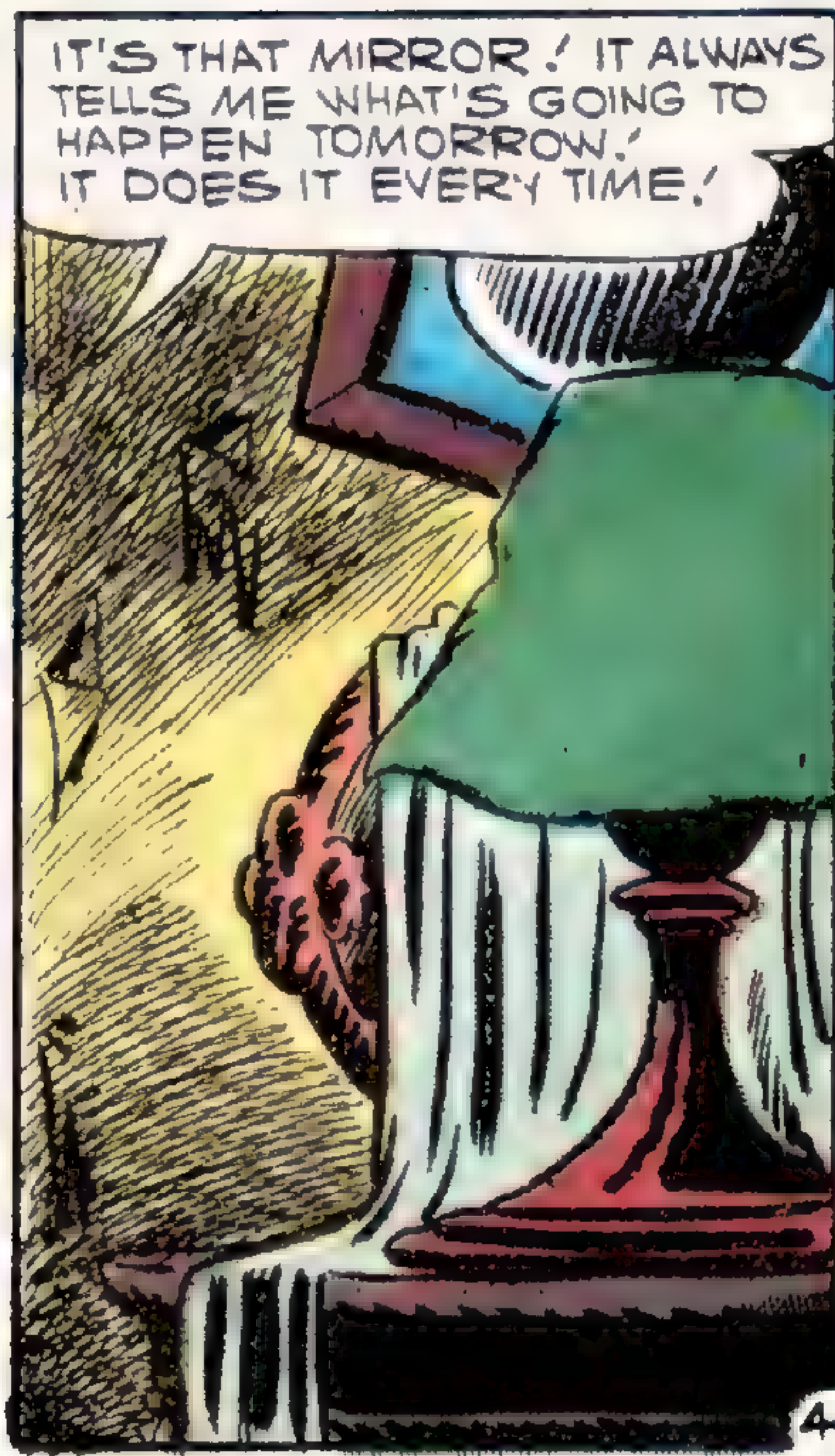
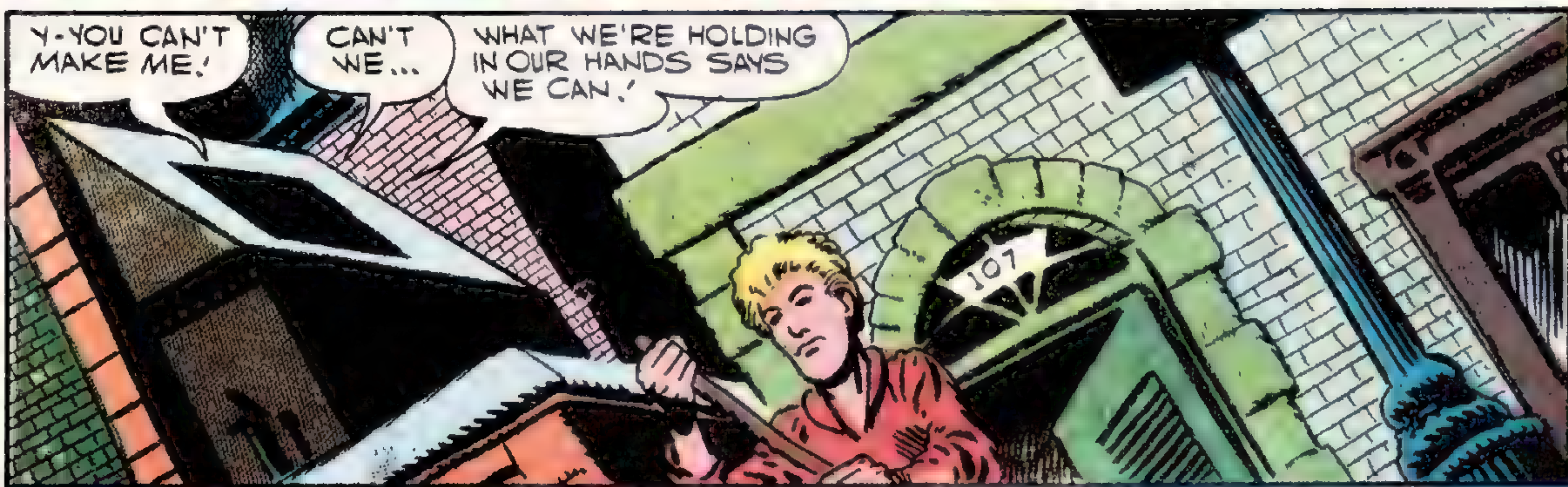


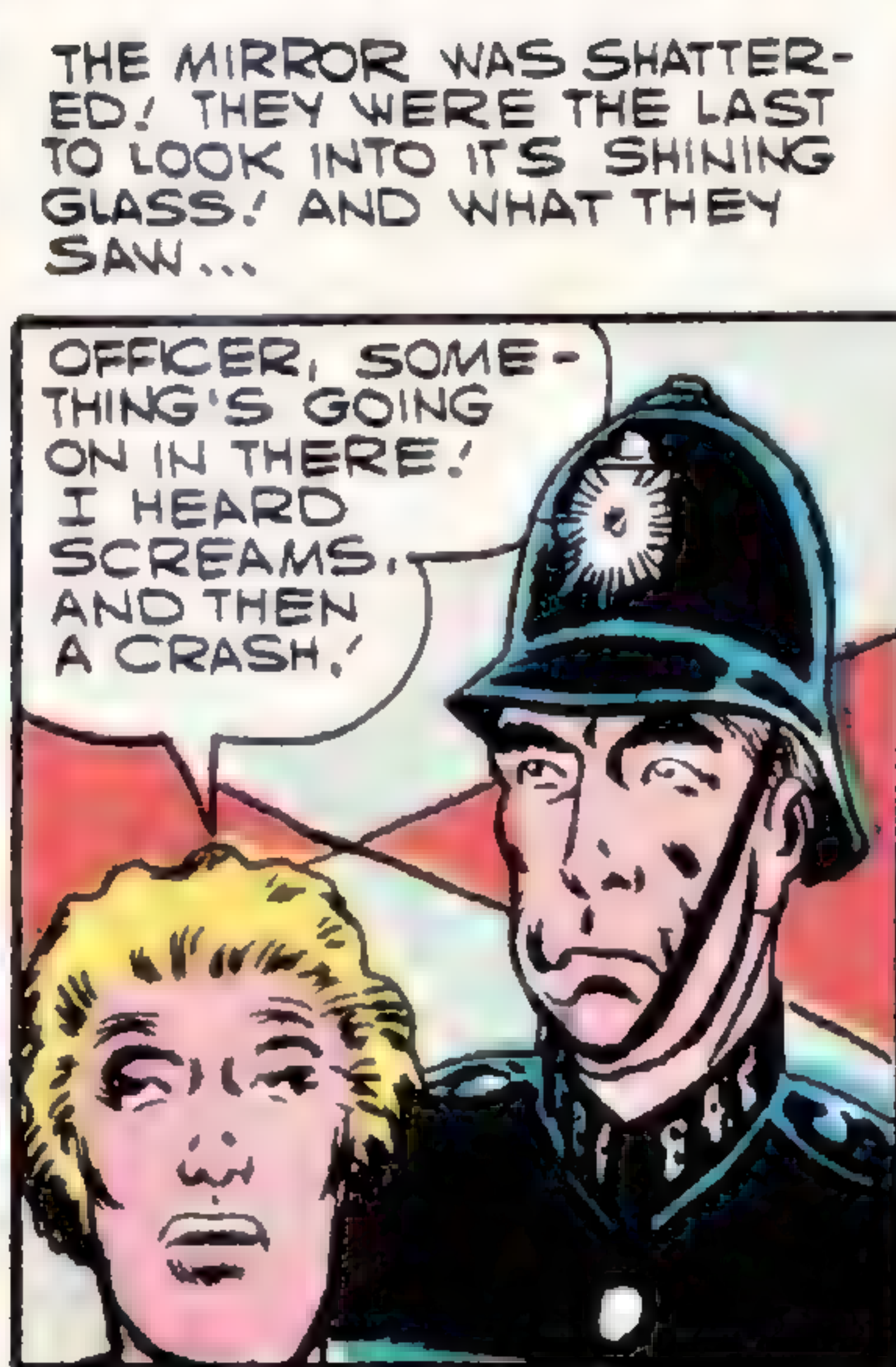
Steve Ditko











The Man who Saw Again

NOTHING IS UNKNOWN TO THE MYSTERIOUS TRAVELER -- NEITHER THE FARTHERMOST REACHES OF EARTH, NOR THE INNERMOST RECESSES OF MEN'S HEARTS! I GO EVERYWHERE... AND I SEE ALL!

AND I WAS THERE THIS TIME TOO WHEN THE UNBELIEVABLE OCCURRED! I WAS WATCHING IN THE SHADOWS WHEN...

I-- I CAN SEE!

Ditko

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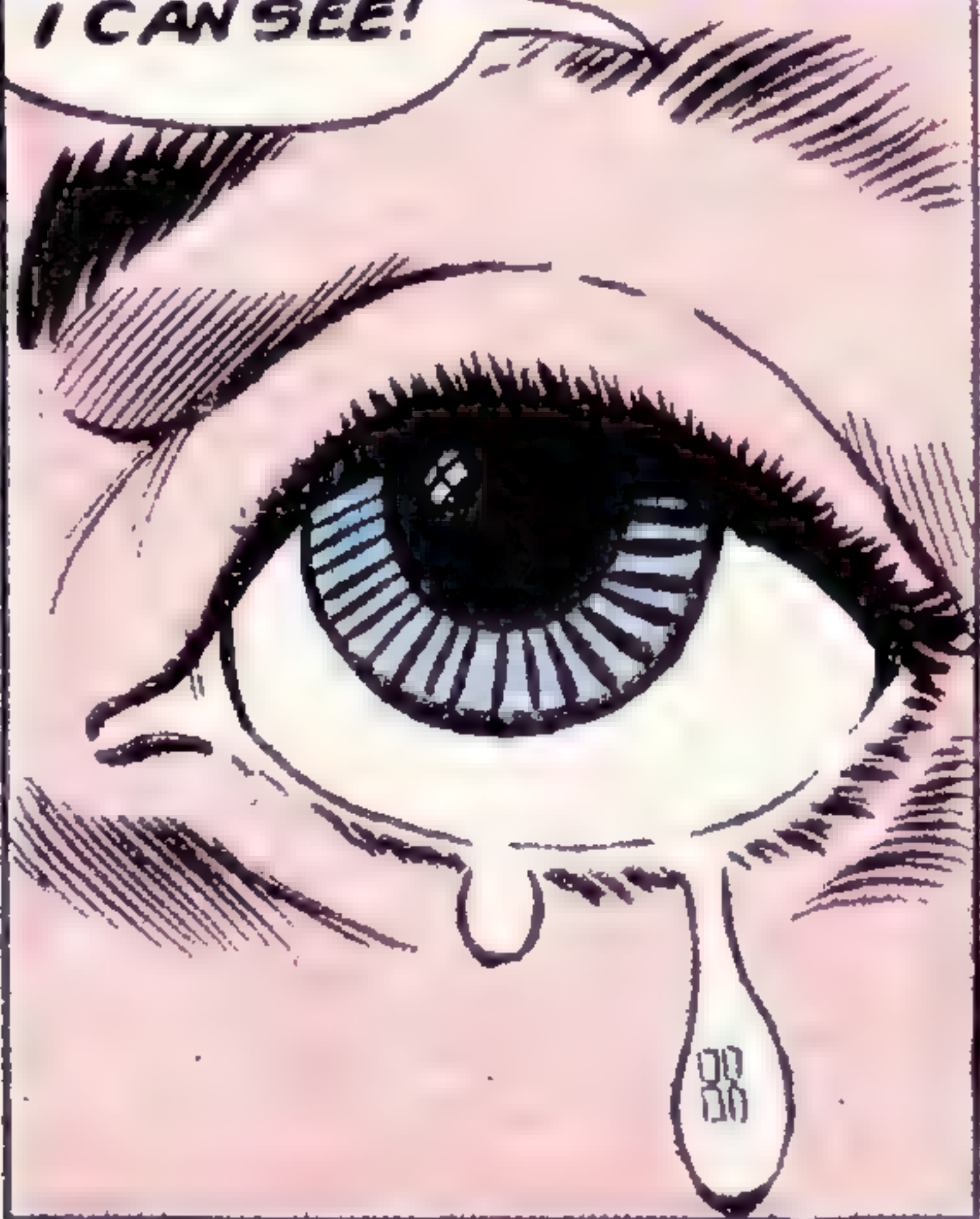
I'M NOT BLIND ANY MORE! AFTER ALL THESE YEARS... AT LAST I CAN SEE AGAIN!

WHAT HAPPENED?

I DON'T KNOW! THE BLIND MAN FELL... AND ALL OF A SUDDEN HIS SIGHT'S BEEN RESTORED!

BUT I KNOW WHAT HAPPENED!
AND NOW YOU SHALL KNOW
TOO!

I CAN SEE!
I CAN SEE!



BLINDED AS THE RESULT OF
AN INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT,
HOW ELSE COULD MAC
THOMPSON EARN A LIVING?

THANK YOU, SIR!
THANK YOU!



AND ONLY A MAN WITH THE
ACUTE HEARING THAT THE
BLIND ALWAYS DEVELOP TO
COMPENSATE FOR THEIR
LACK OF VISION, COULD HAVE
HEARD WHAT MAC THOMPSON
HEARD EARLIER TODAY...

HMM... SOUNDS LIKE FOOT-
STEPS! BUT SO TINY! IT'S
SOMETHING SMALLER THAN
A MOUSE... BUT WEARING
SHOES!

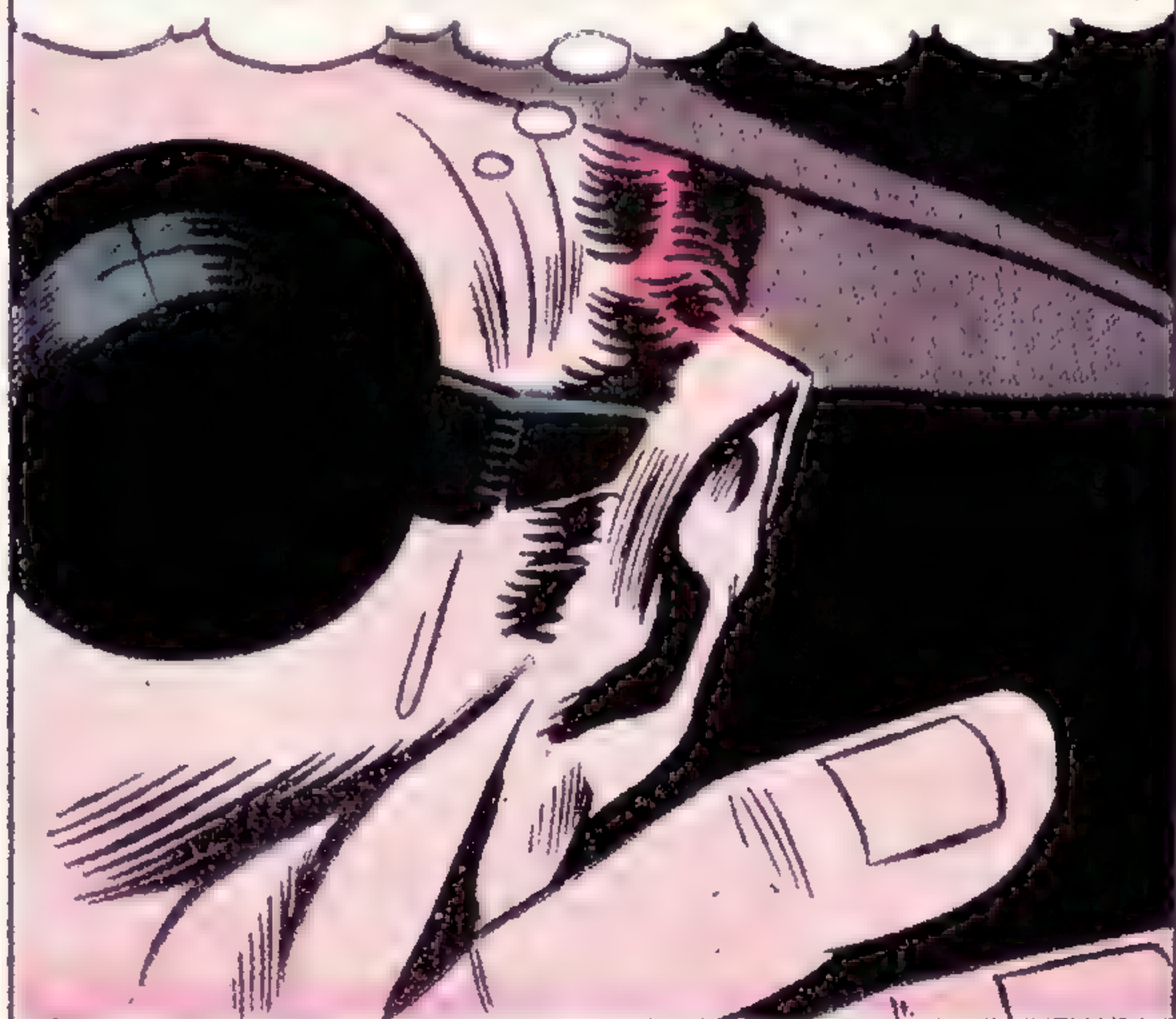


ONLY HE COULD HAVE HEARD THE FAINT
BUT FRANTIC WHISPER COMING FROM THE
ENDLESS BLACK OF HIS BLINDNESS...

HIDE ME!
PLEASE HIDE ME!
THEY'RE COMING
AFTER ME!

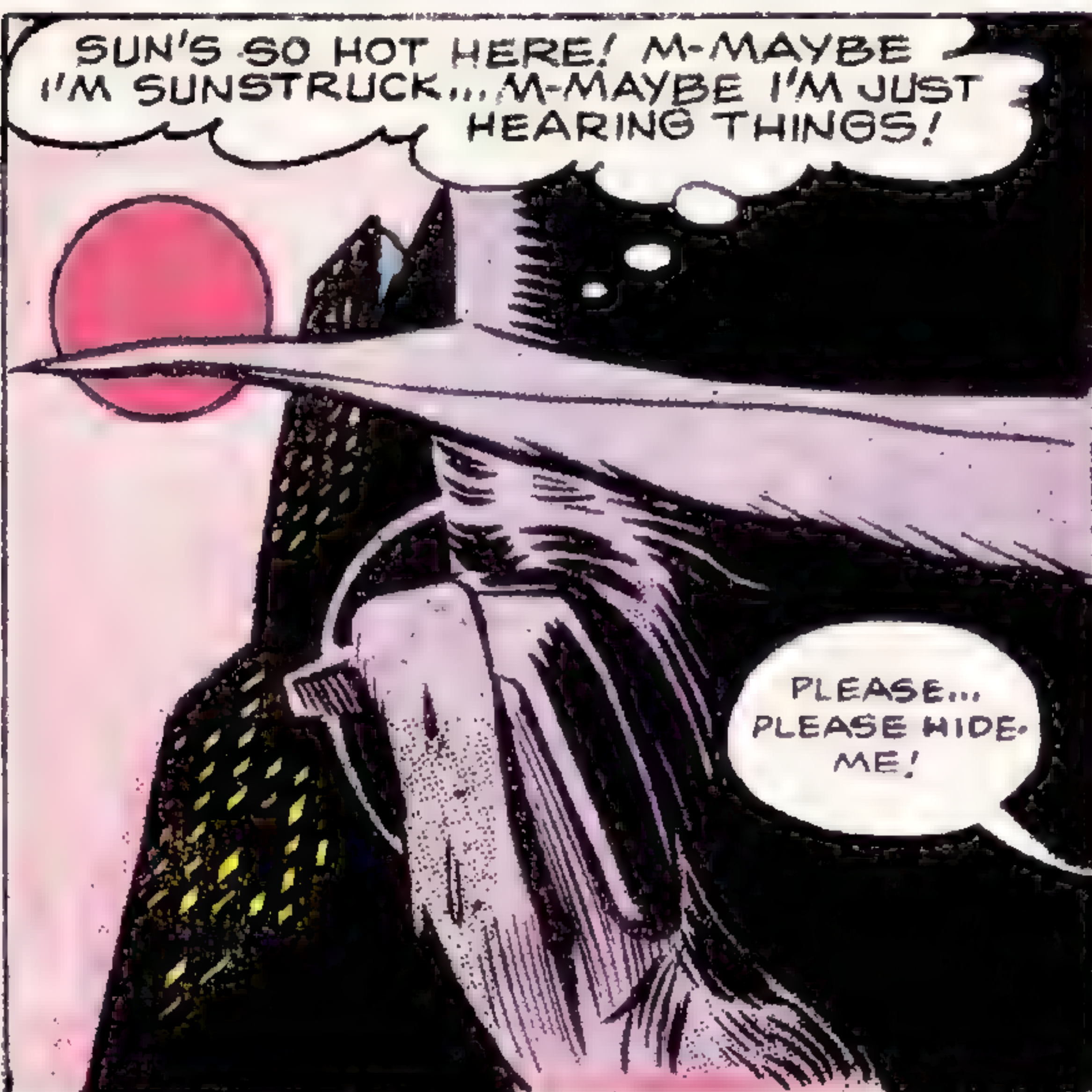


IT--IT'S A TINY MAN! HE'S STANDING ON
MY SHOULDER... WHISPERING IN MY EAR!



SUN'S SO HOT HERE! M-MAYBE
I'M SUNSTRUCK... M-MAYBE I'M JUST
HEARING THINGS!

PLEASE...
PLEASE HIDE-
ME!



COULD HE TRUST HIS SENSES OF HEARING
AND TOUCH? IT WOULD BE SO EASY TO
TAKE REFUGE IN DISBELIEF... AFTER ALL,
THE TINY BEING, IF IT EXISTED, WAS BEING
PURSUED BY SOME ENEMY! WHY SHOULD
HE EXPOSE HIMSELF TO NEEDLESS DANGER?

PLEASE...
PLEASE...

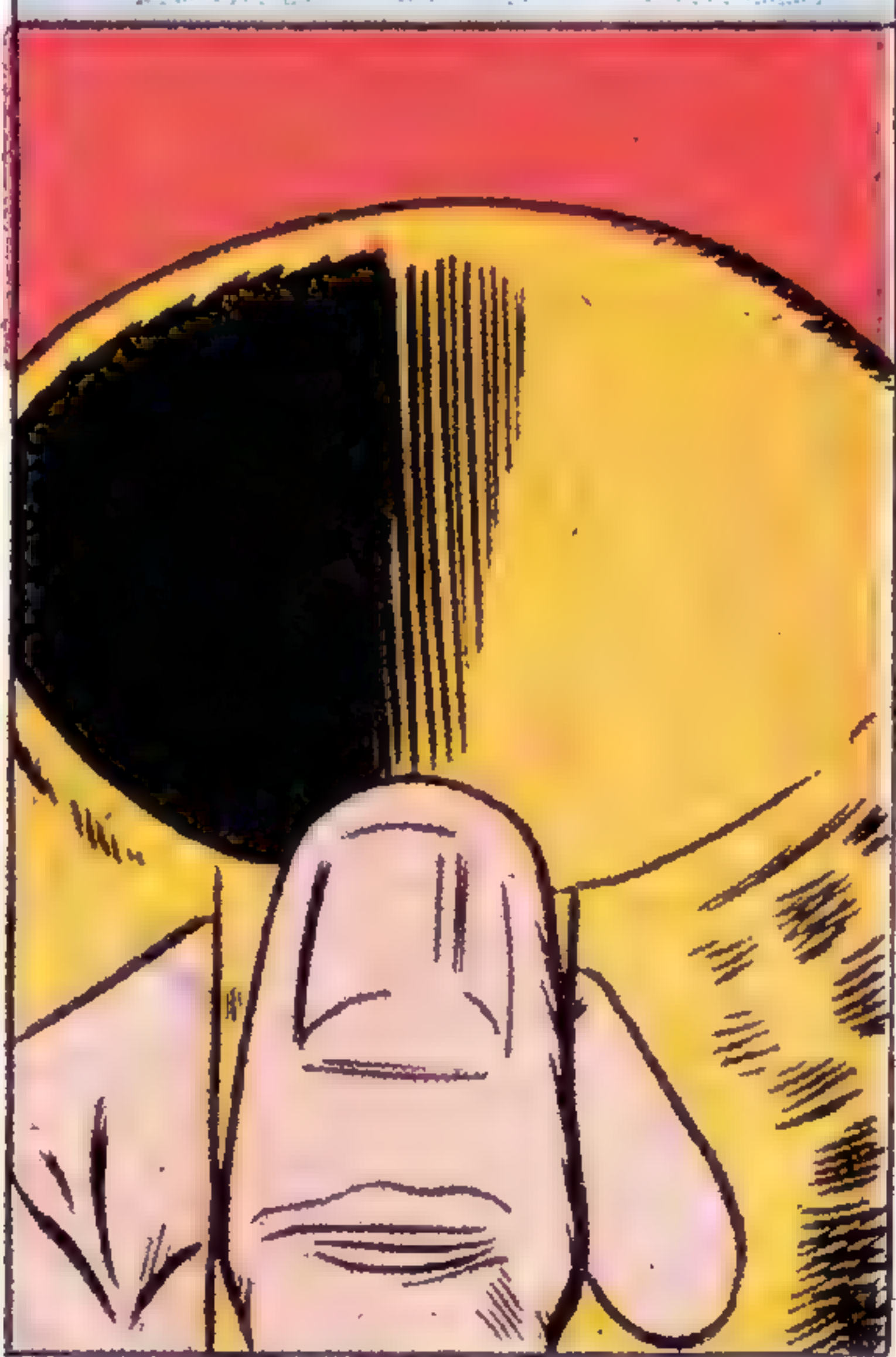


BUT MAC THOMPSON CHOSE TO BELIEVE... HE CHOSE TO GRANT REFUGE TO THE LITTLE FUGITIVE...



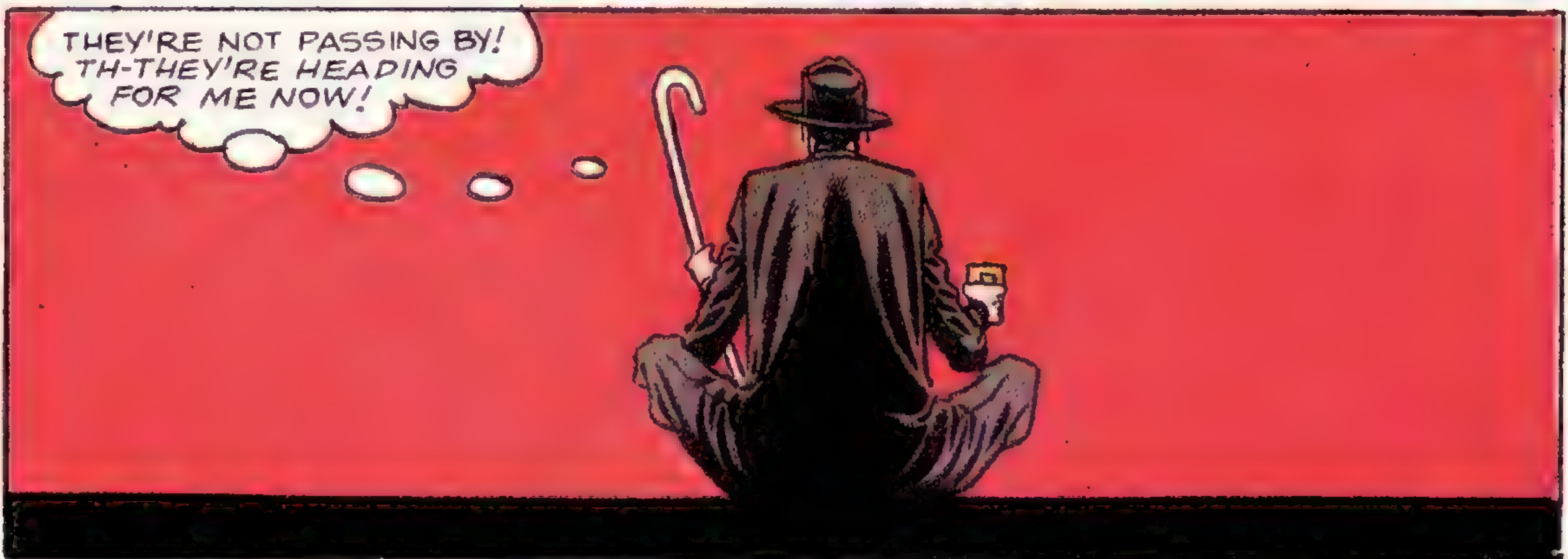
SHHH!
HOP INTO
MY CUP!

A SPLIT-SECOND LATER HE THOUGHT HE HEARD THE FAINTEST OF THUDS ON THE HANDKERCHIEF FOLDED OVER THE BOTTOM OF HIS TIN CUP...



AND THEN...

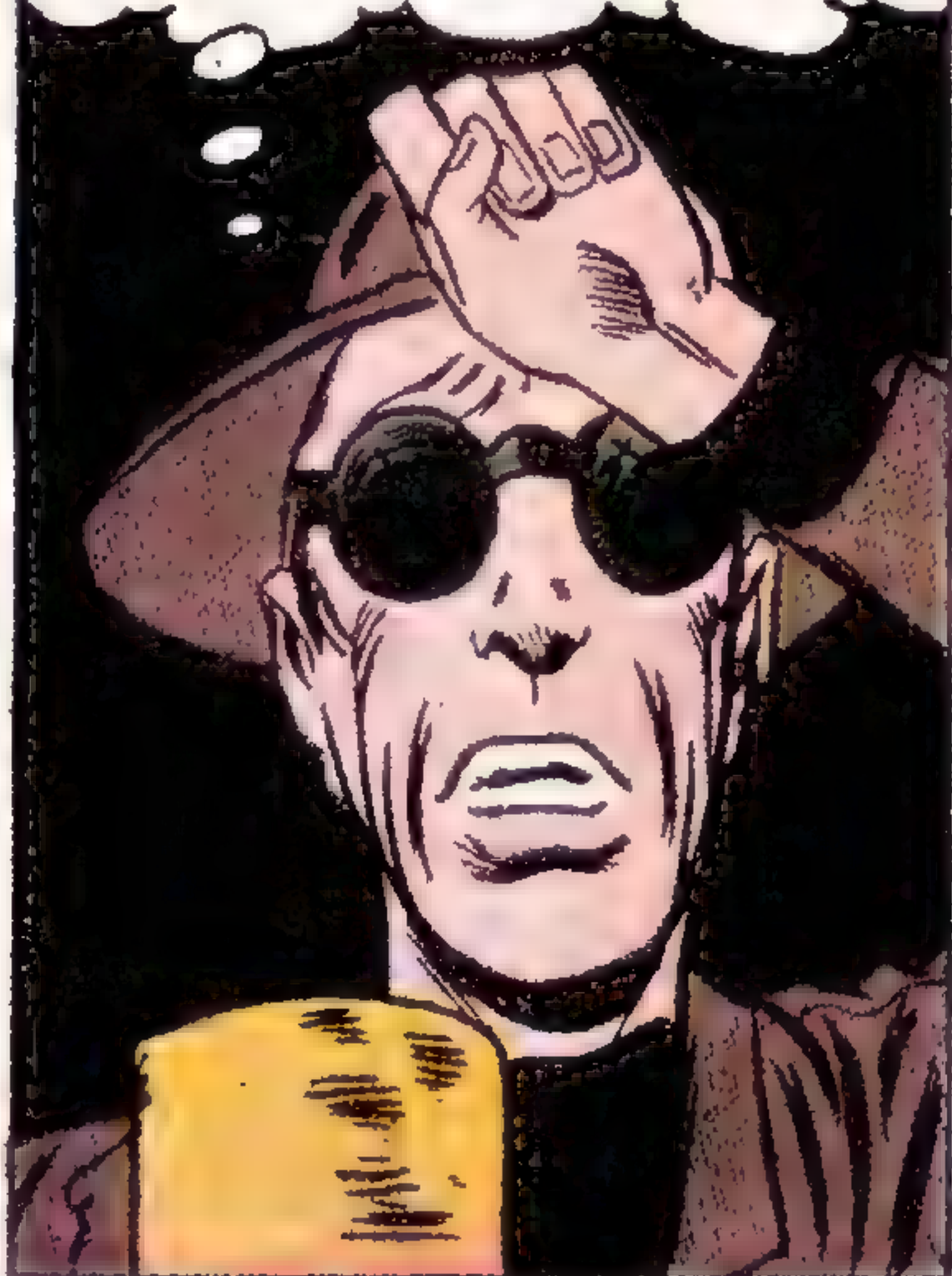
MORE OF THOSE FOOTSTEPS... A BUNCH OF TINY MEN! THEY'RE COMING CLOSER!



THEY'RE NOT PASSING BY!
TH-THEY'RE HEADING
FOR ME NOW!



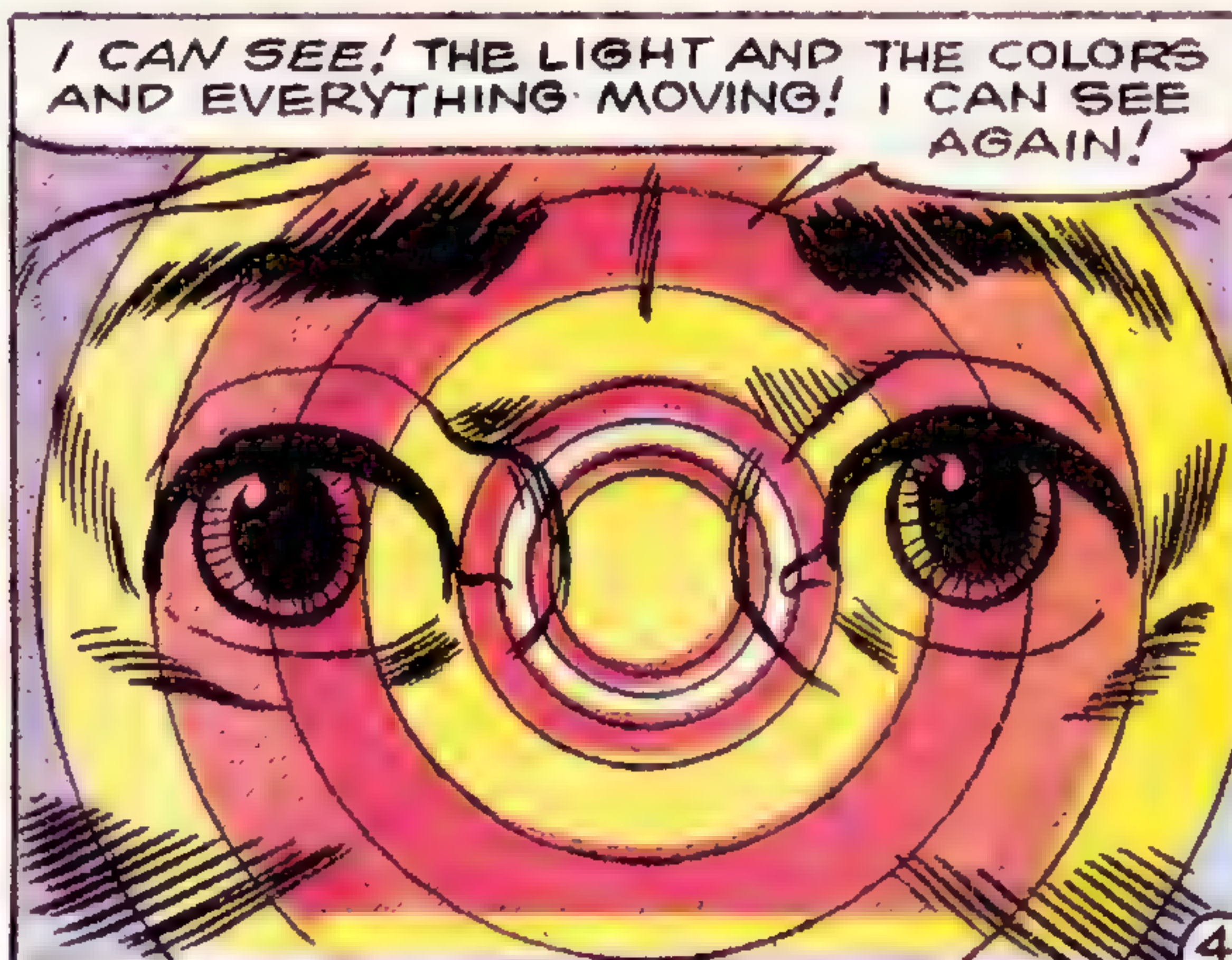
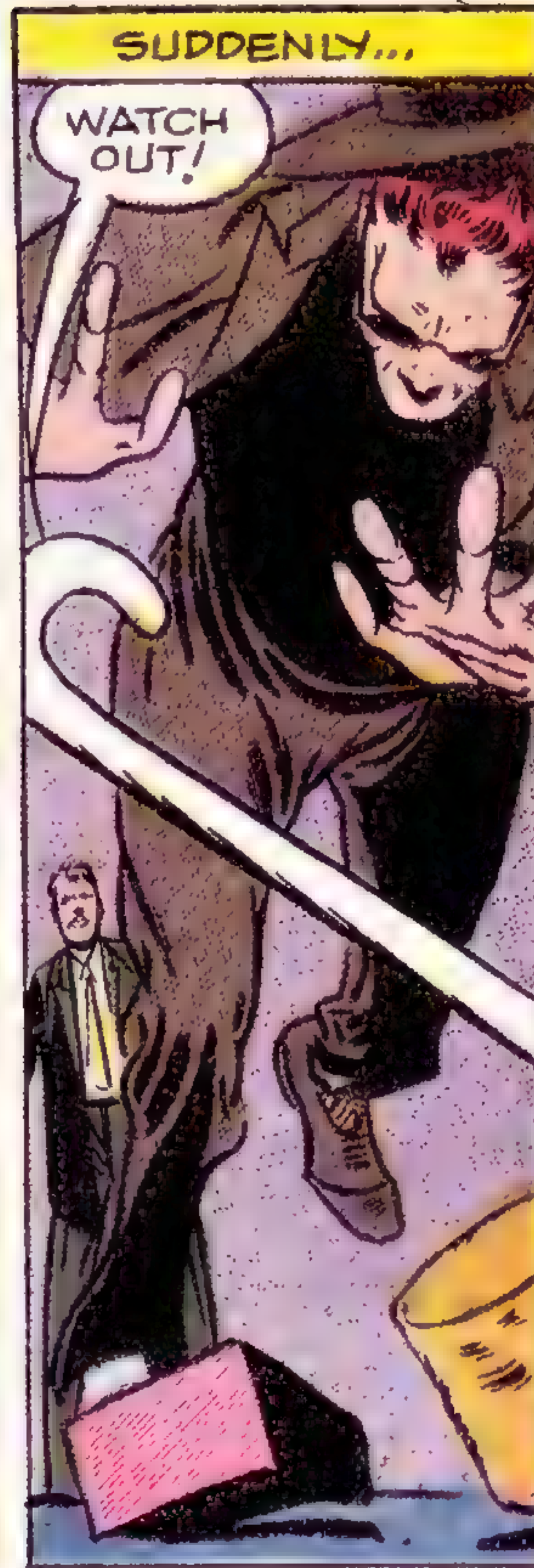
WHEW! FALSE ALARM!
THEY WENT BY, AFTER ALL!



THE DANGER HAD PASSED!
AND NOW...

HE'S JUMPED OUT OF THE CUP! HE'S CLIMBING UP ON MY SHOULDER AGAIN!





SOMEONE HAD CALLED AN AMBULANCE! A YOUNG INTERNE SPOKE UP...

YOU CAN SEE ALL RIGHT! AND I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED!

THE SHOCK OF THE FALL JARRED THE DAMAGED OPTIC NERVE! IT SNAPPED IT BACK INTO PLACE!

SURE... SURE!

THAT'S ALL THAT HAPPENED! IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN THAT OTHER STUFF! THAT WAS JUST--A CRAZY DREAM... THAT'S ALL!

YOU WON'T BE NEEDING THIS CUP ANY MORE!

I SURE WON'T!

IT WAS THEN THAT MAC THOMPSON'S FACE WRITHED IN A GRIMACE OF SHOCK! FOR NOW HE KNEW WHY HIS VISION HAD BEEN RESTORED!

(GASP!)

NOW HE WAS STARING AT WHAT I, THE MYSTERIOUS TRAVELER, SEE EVERY DAY!

AN IMPRINT... LEFT BY A TINY BODY... ON MY HANDKERCHIEF!



IF THIS REPORT OF THE EVENTS OF THE NIGHT OF JULY 13th DOESN'T PROVE THE IMPORTANCE ONCE AND FOR ALL OF THE AGENCY I WORK FOR... I'LL HAND IN MY RESIGNATION TO THE HUMAN RACE!

THE MAN WHO LOST HIS FACE

APPROXIMATELY 7:15 P.M., MARCH 13th... JOHN HAWKINS FINDS HIMSELF WALKING DAZEDLY ALONG A COUNTRY ROAD THAT HE HAS NEVER SEEN BEFORE...



S 2168

8:20 P.M.! AFTER HITCHING A RIDE INTO THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY, HAWKINS CABS TO HIS HOME! TURNING UP THE PATH, HE GREETES HIS NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR...

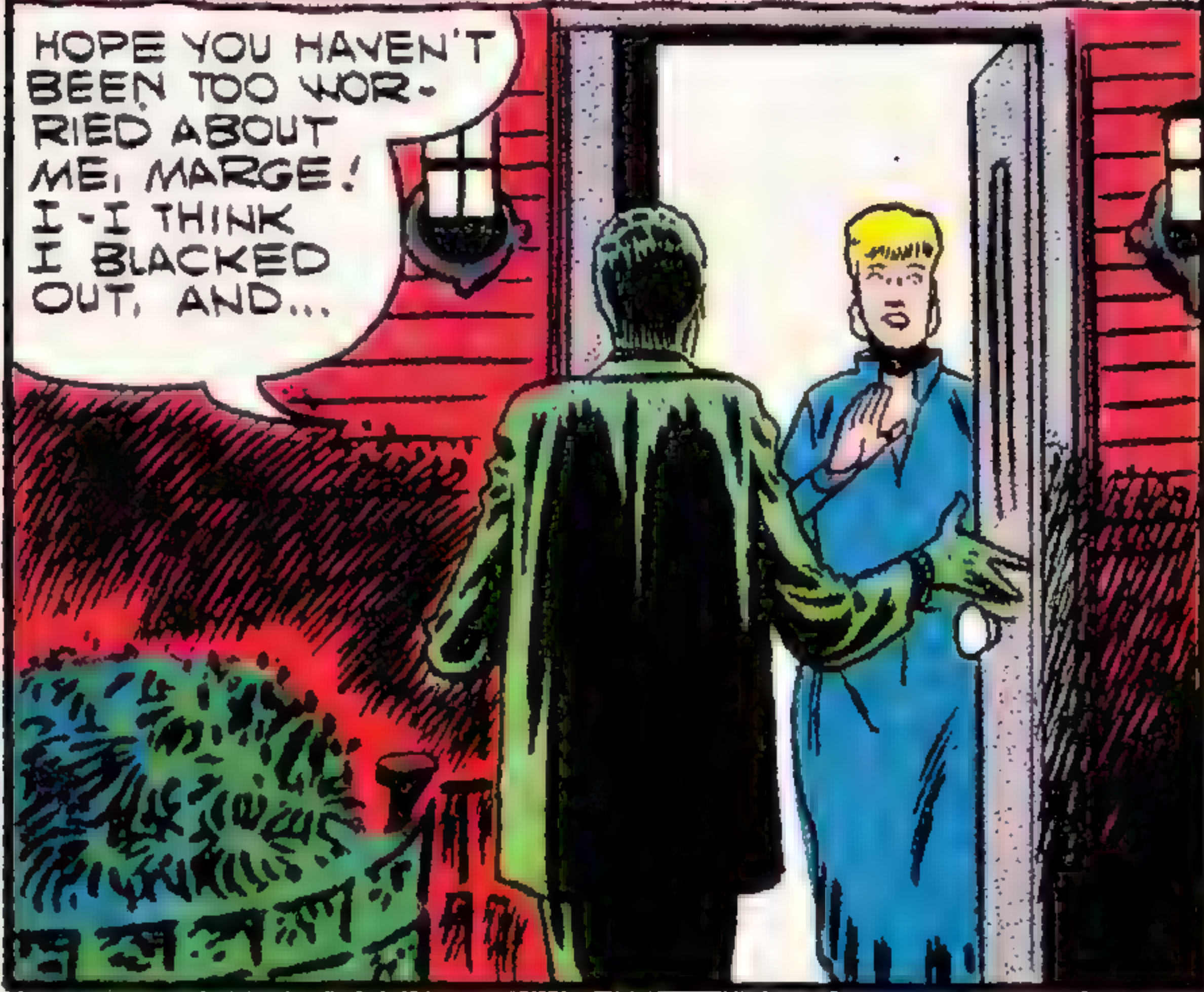


WH-WHY DIDN'T HE ANSWER ME? WHY IS HE LOOKING AT ME THAT WAY... AS IF HE NEVER SAW ME BEFORE!



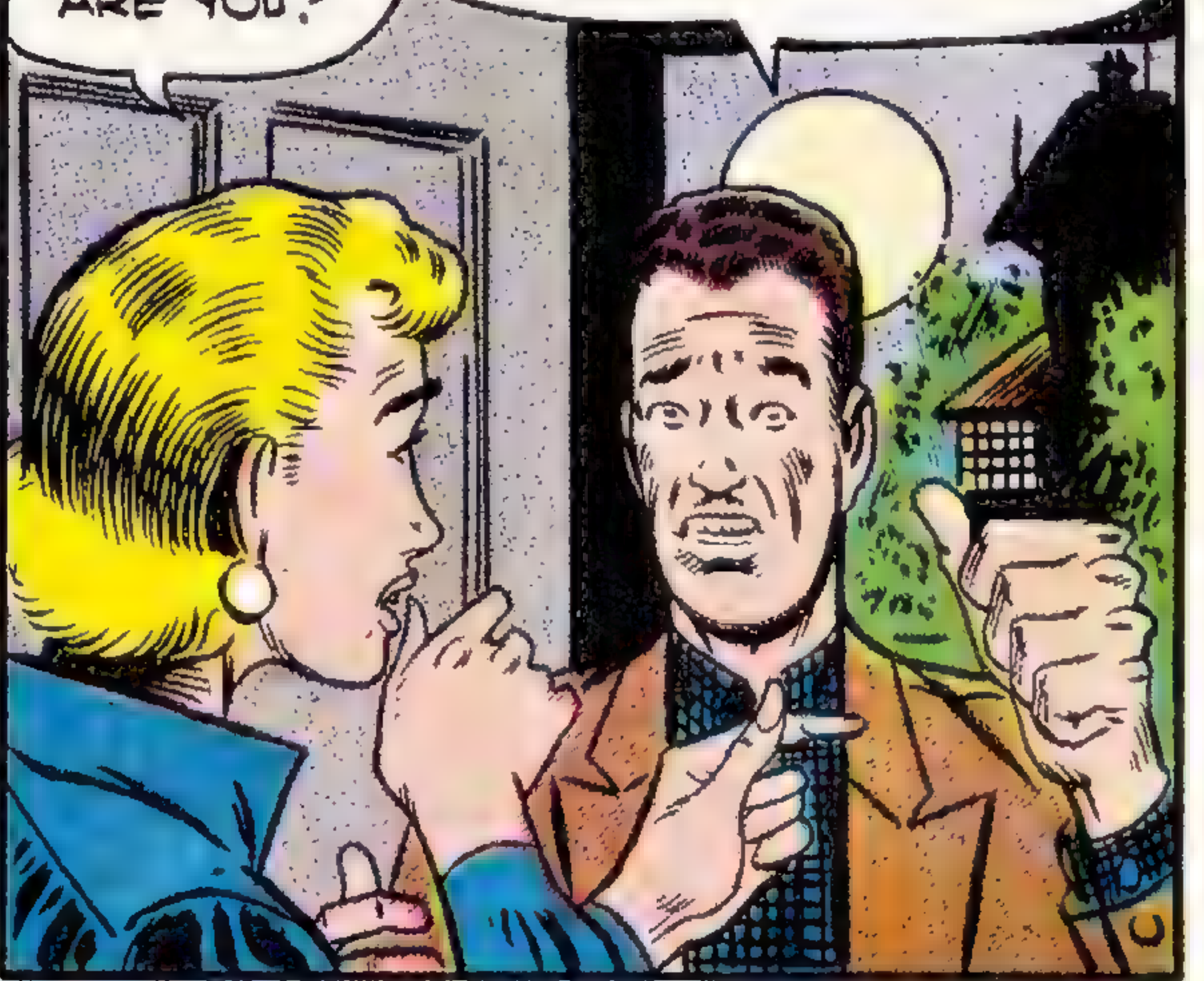
8:22 PM... FINDING HIMSELF WITHOUT KEYS, HAWKINS RINGS THE DOORBELL OF HIS HOME, AND HIS WIFE COMES TO THE DOOR...

HOPE YOU HAVEN'T BEEN TOO WORRIED ABOUT ME, MARGE! I THINK I BLACKED OUT, AND...



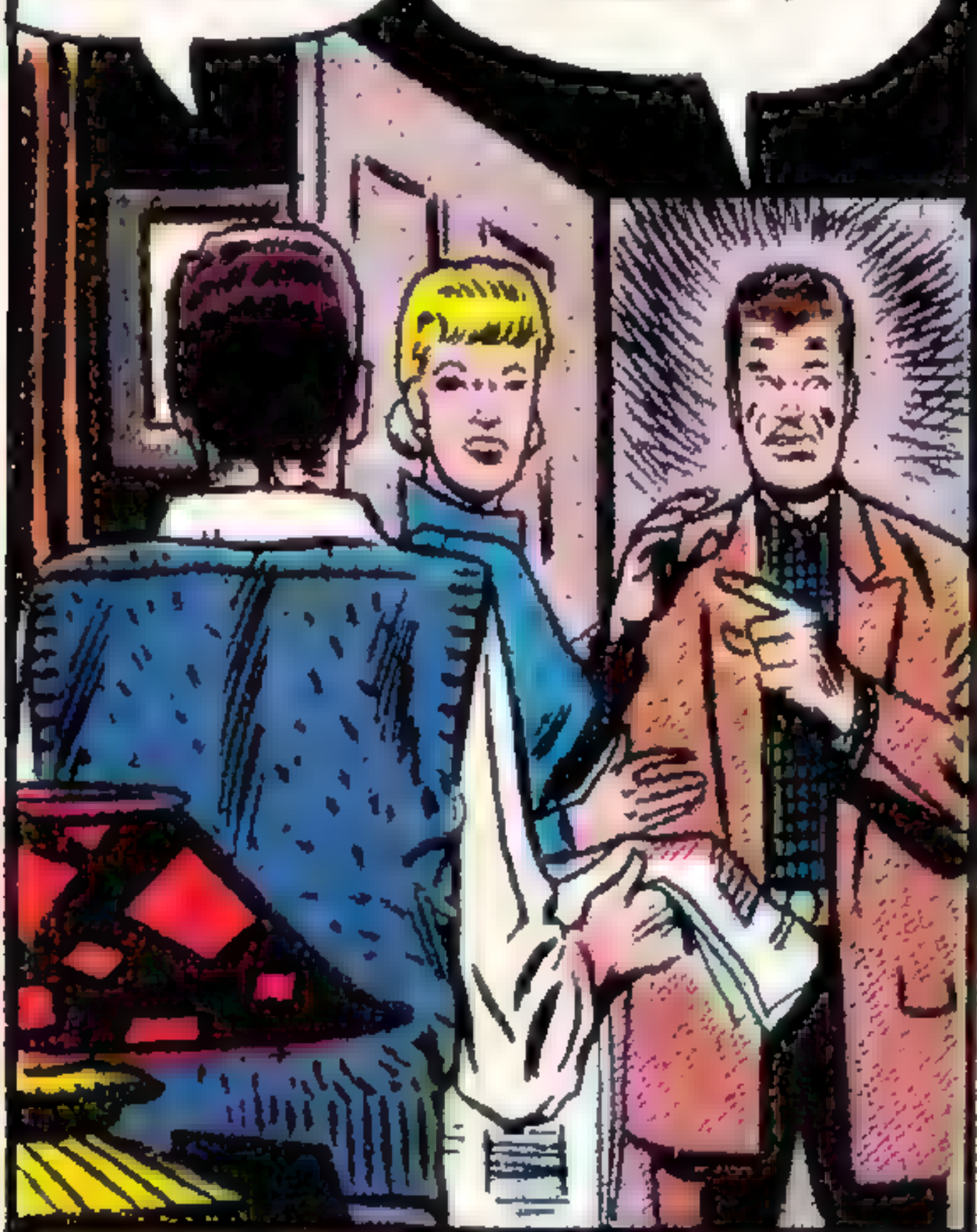
HOW DID YOU KNOW MY NAME? WHO ARE YOU?

IS EVERYBODY CRAZY? I'M YOUR HUSBAND, JOHN HAWKINS! WHO ELSE!



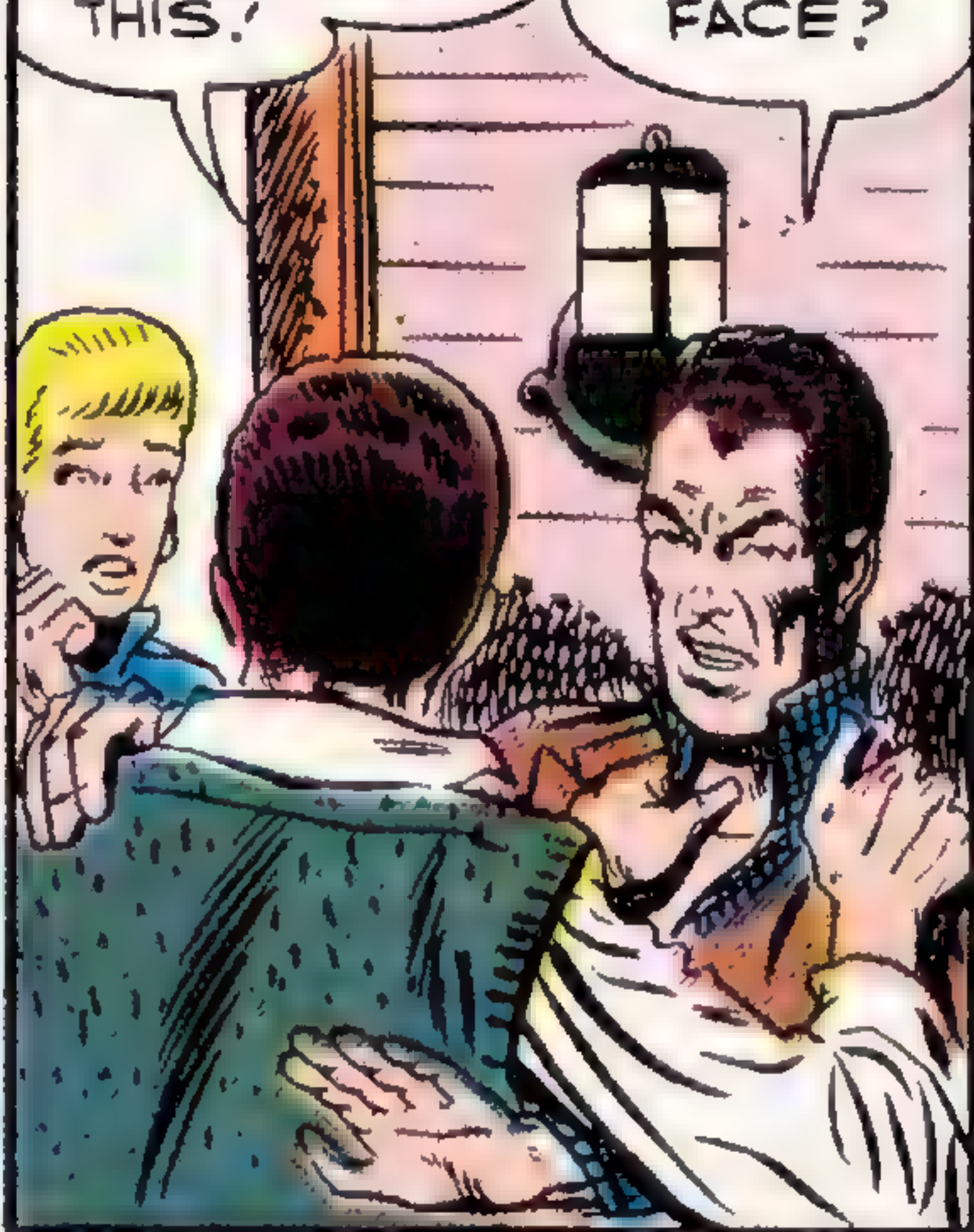
ANYTHING WRONG, MARGE?

HEY! YOU HAVE MY FACE!!



BETTER GET INSIDE, MARGE! I'LL HANDLE THIS!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH MY FACE?



SOMETHING'S SCREWY! HE'S NOT THE REAL JOHN HAWKINS! HE MUST BE WEARING A MASK! COULD TWO MEN WHO WEREN'T TWINS LOOK SO MUCH ALIKE?

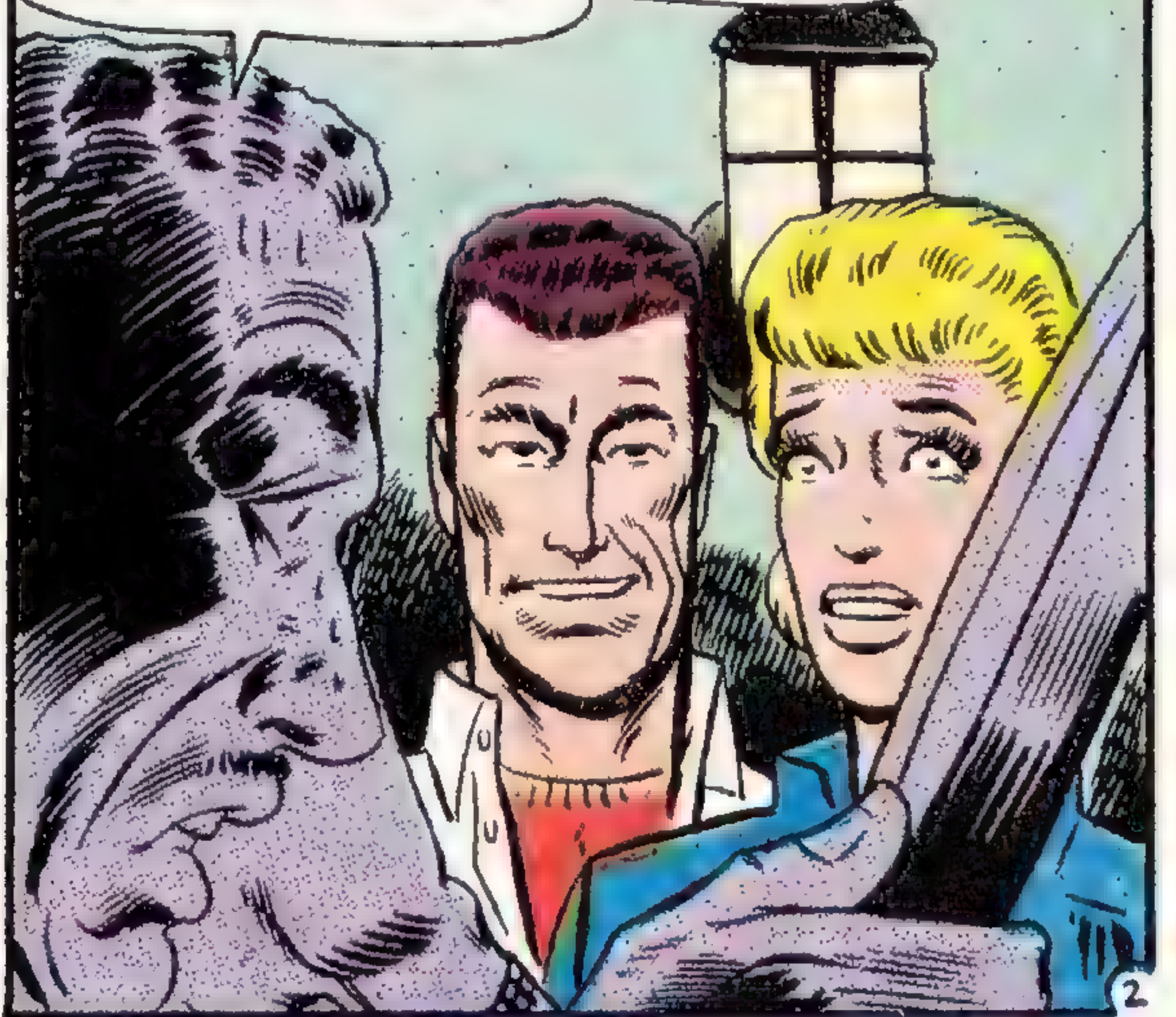


BRING HIM A MIRROR, MARGE! MAYBE THAT'LL BRING HIM TO HIS SENSES!

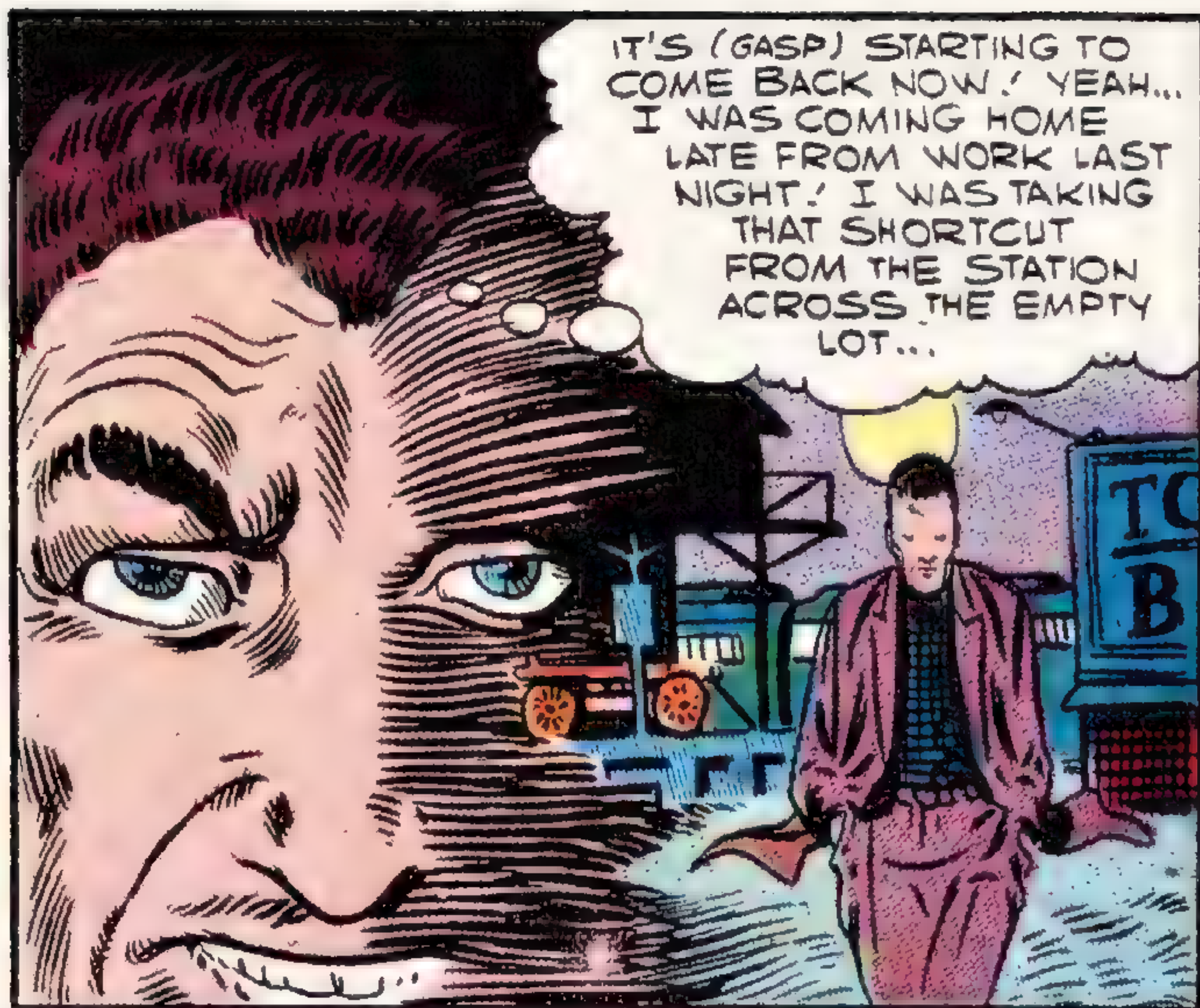
YEAH -- DO THAT! BRING ME A MIRROR!



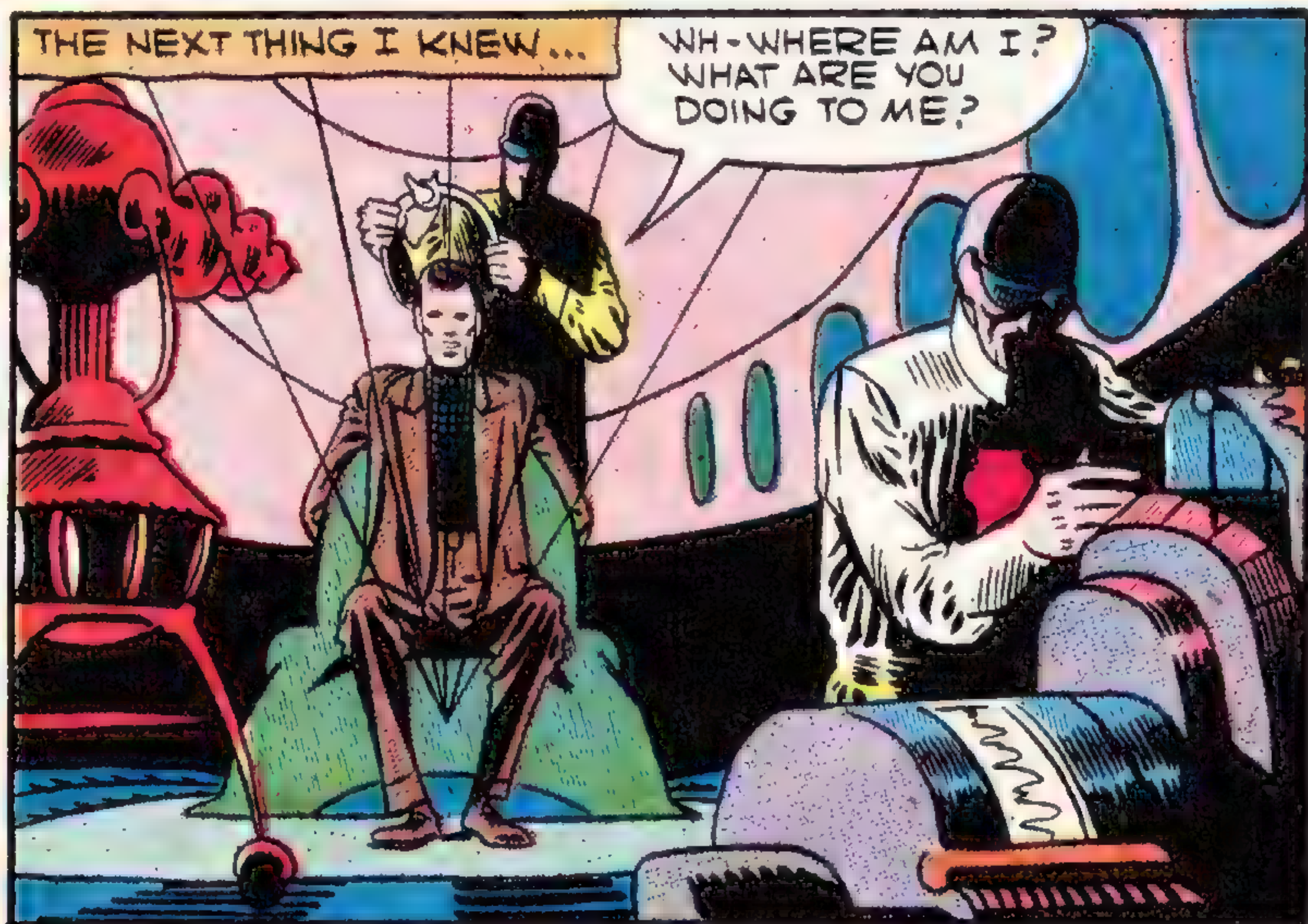
GASP! M-MY FACE HAS CHANGED! HE HAS MY FACE!



8:45 P.M.: TERRIBLY SHAKEN BY WHAT HE SAW IN THE MIRROR, HAWKINS HAS WANDERED OFF DAZEDLY...



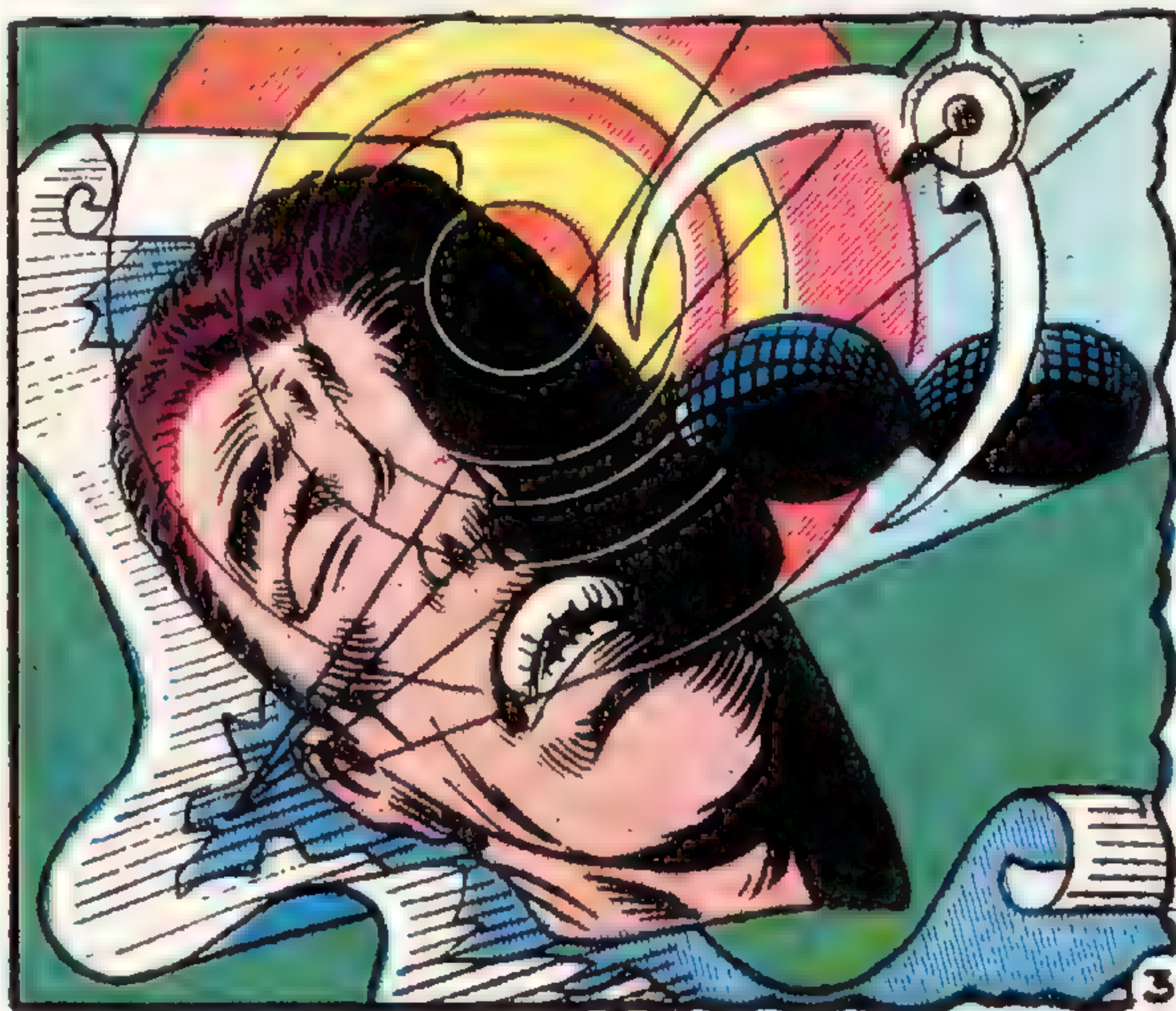
...WHEN ALL OF A SUDDEN THEY GRABBED ME...

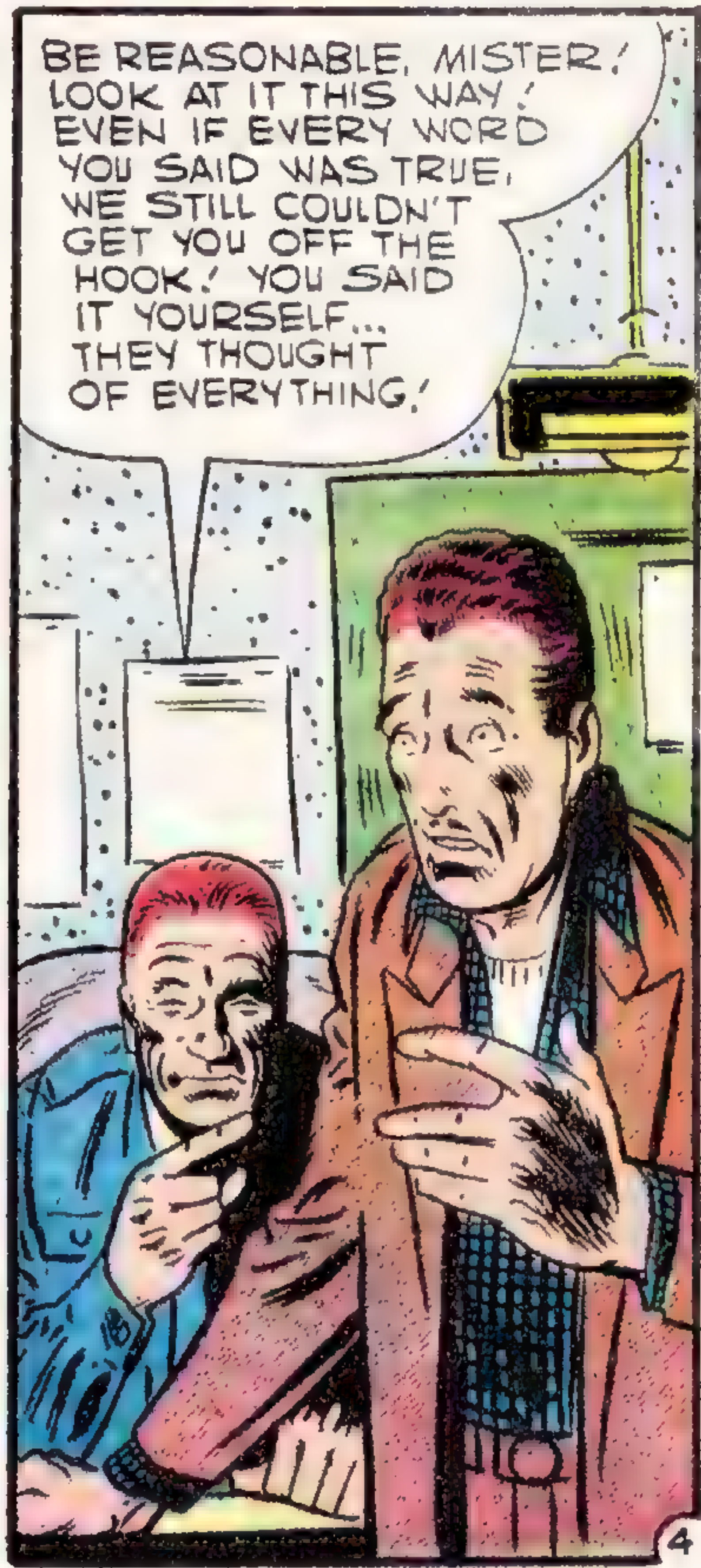
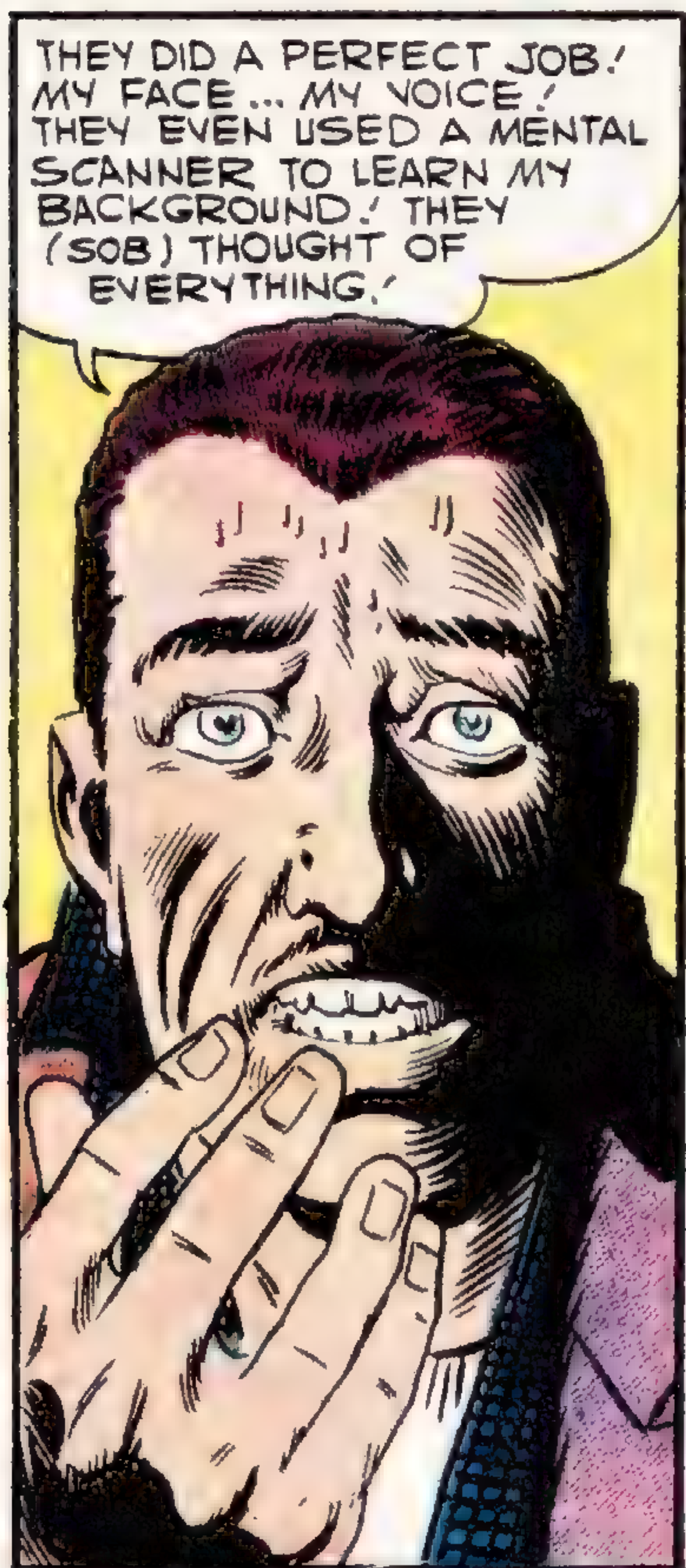
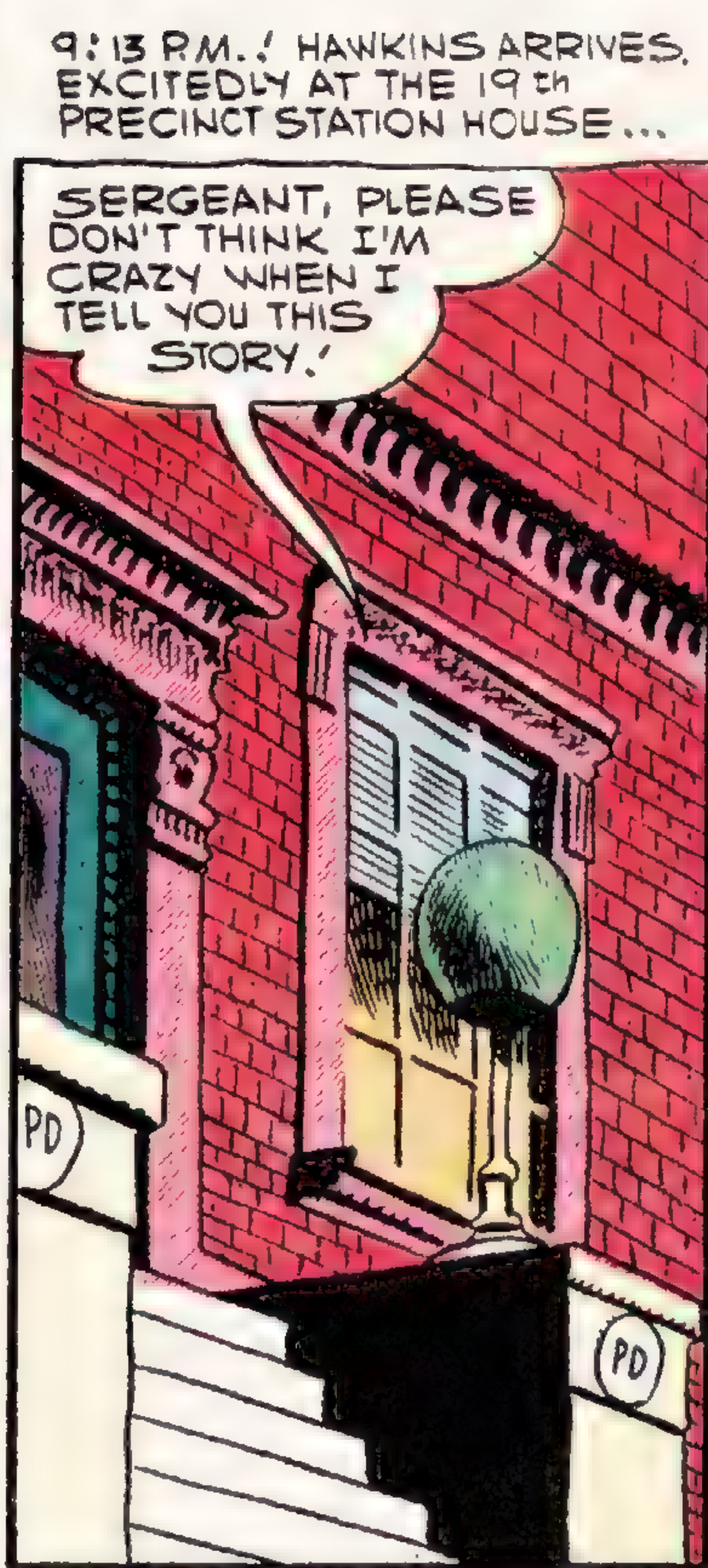
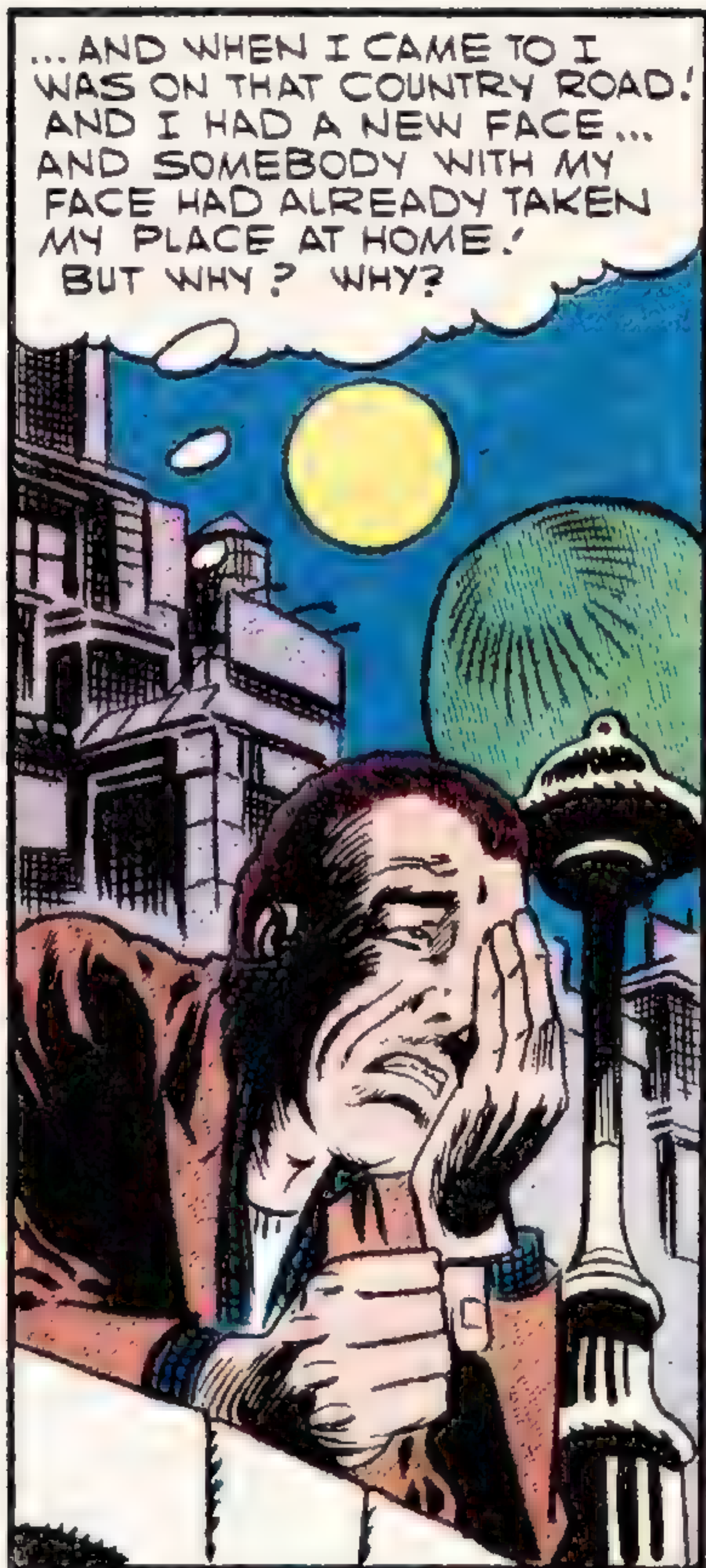


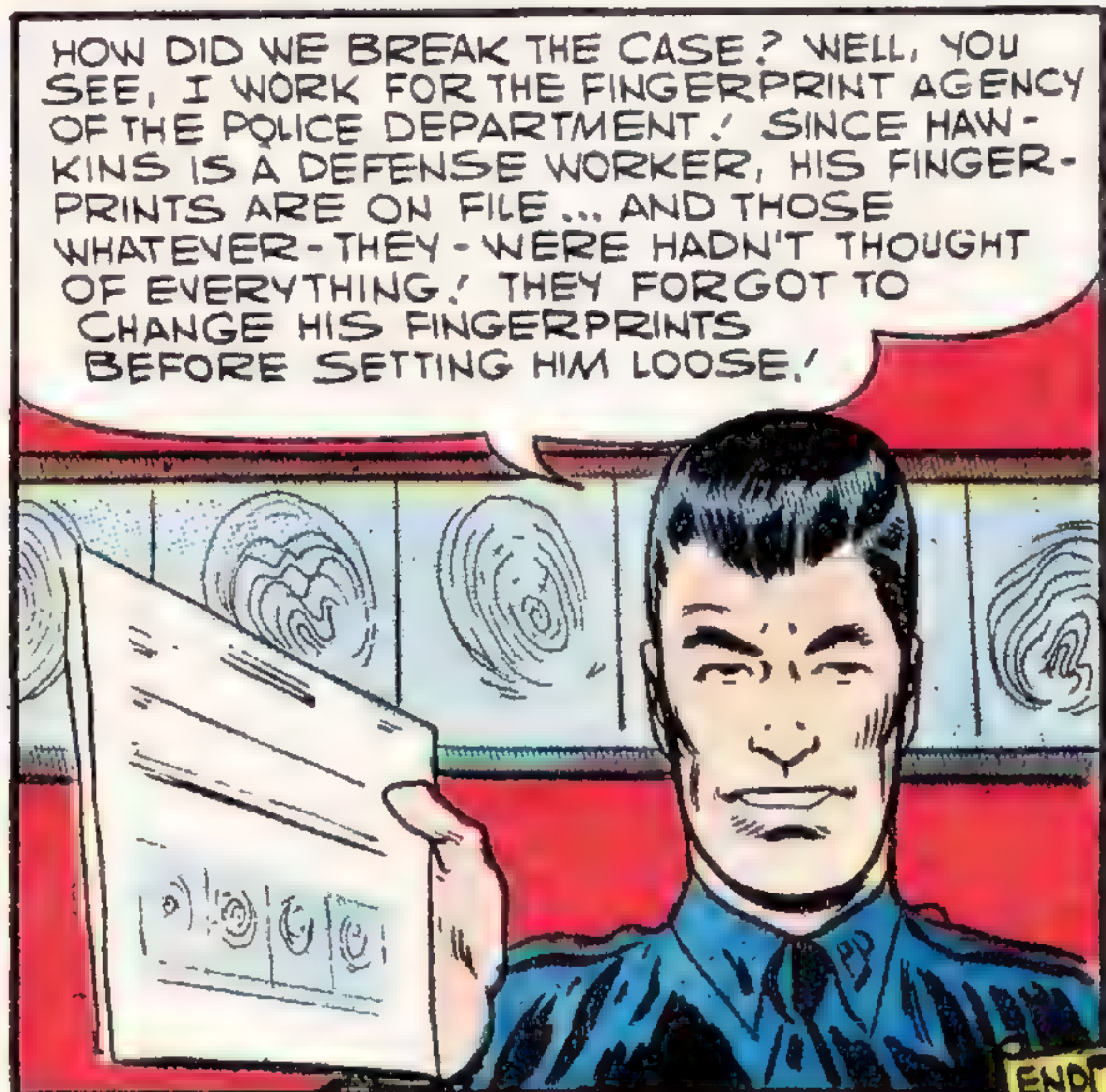
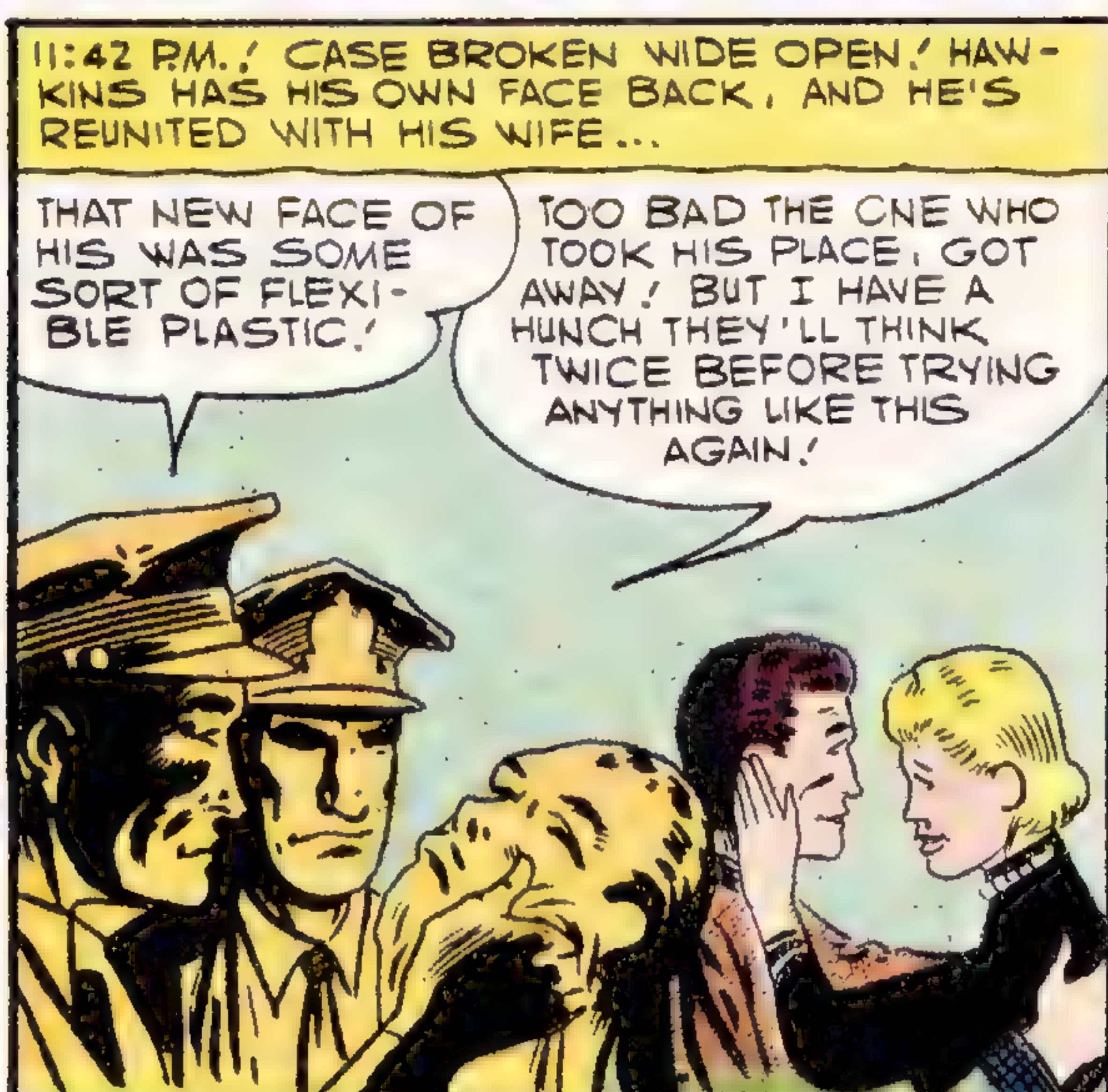
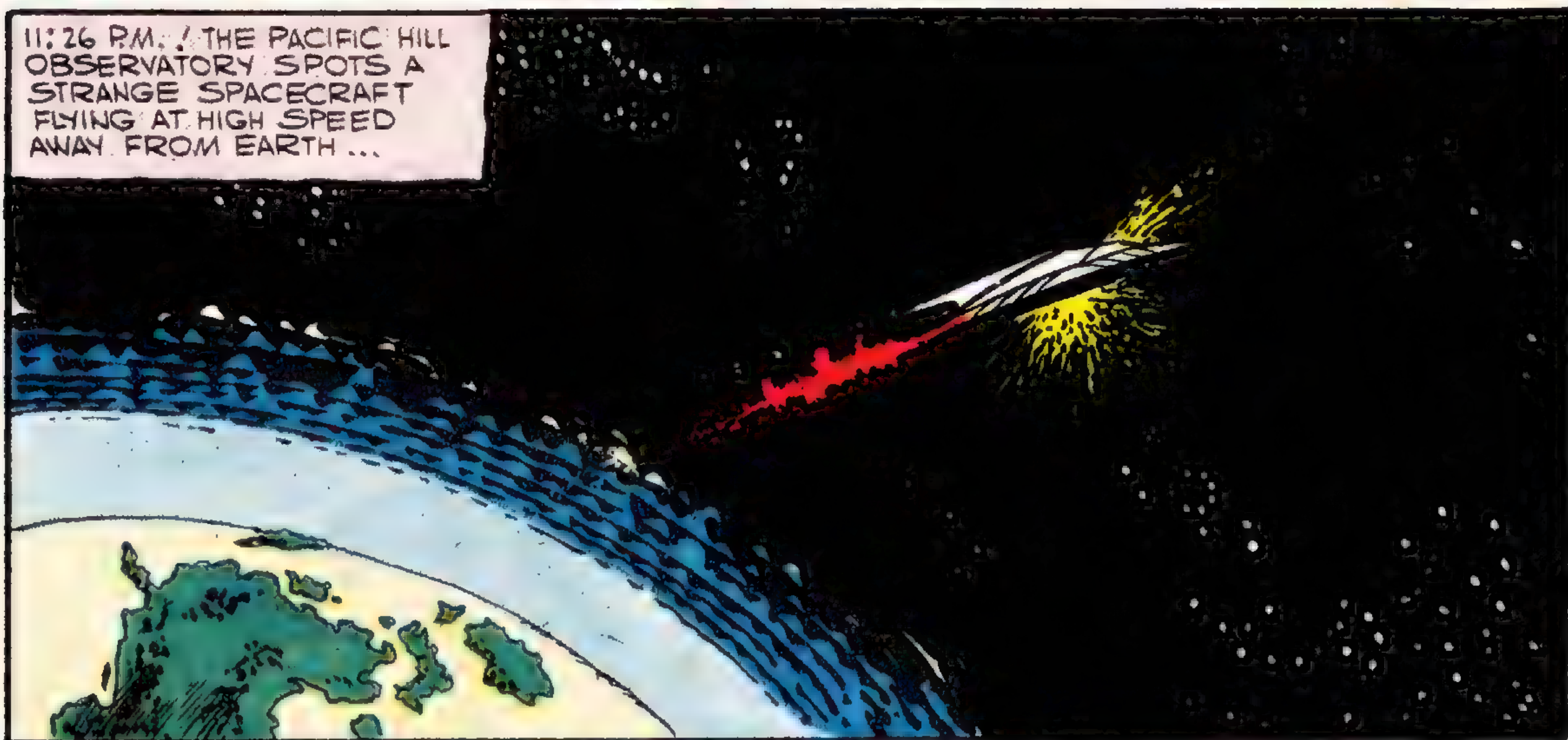
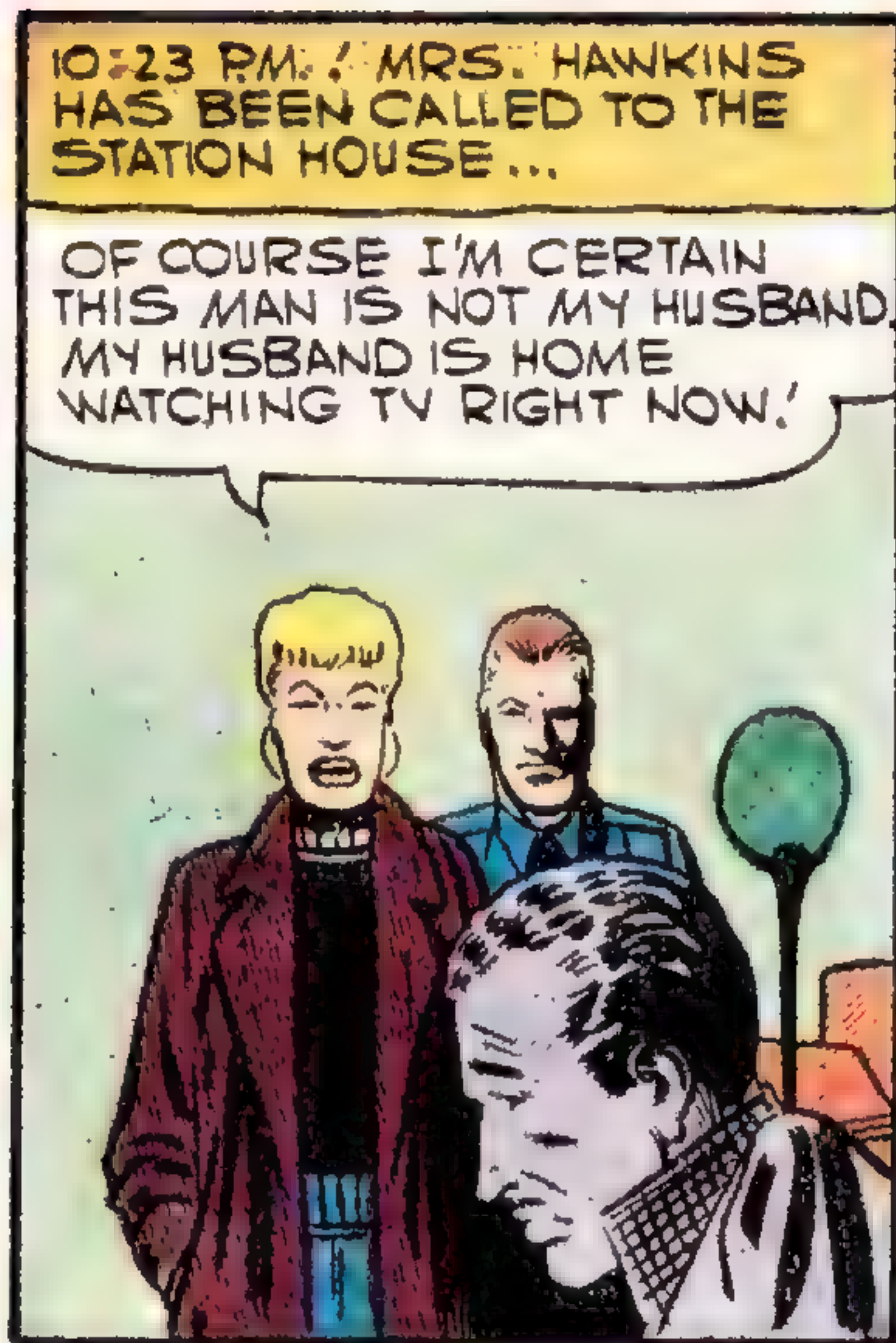
BUT THEY NEVER ANSWERED! THEY JUST KEPT TAKING ALL THOSE MEASUREMENTS... GOING OVER EVERY SQUARE INCH OF MY FACE WITH THE CALIPERS! THEIR TAPE RECORDER KEPT GRINDING AWAY, TAKING DOWN EVERY WORD I SAID...



WHEN THEY WERE FINISHED, THEY FORCED SOME BITTER TASTING STUFF DOWN MY THROAT -- AND THEN I BLACKED OUT...

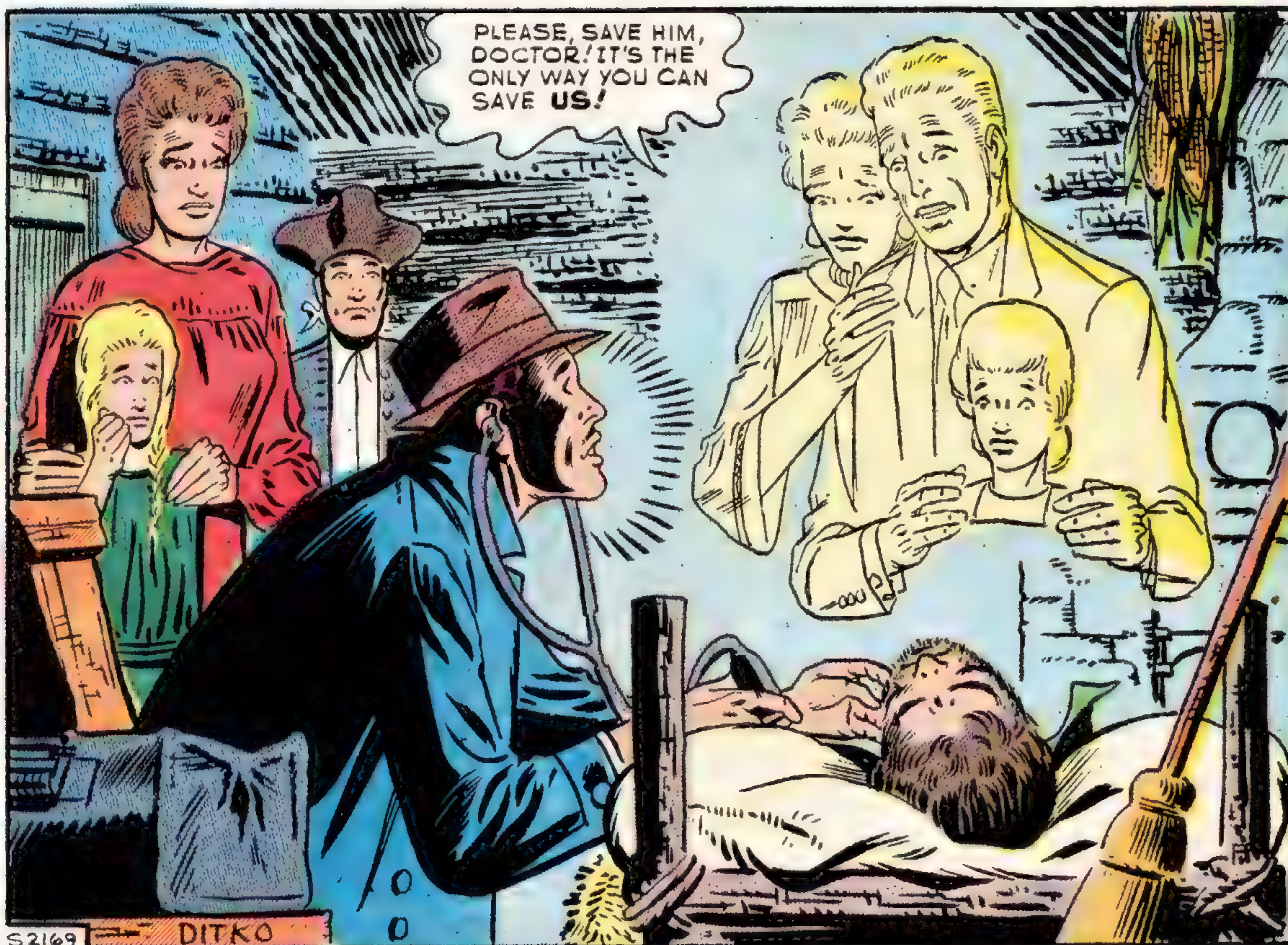






WHEN THE PHONE RINGS IN A DOCTOR'S HOUSE, ONE NEVER KNOWS THE CHAIN OF EVENTS THAT WILL FOLLOW! THIS INCREDIBLE STORY ACTUALLY OCCURRED WHEN DOCTOR SLOAN ANSWERED A...

NIGHT CALL

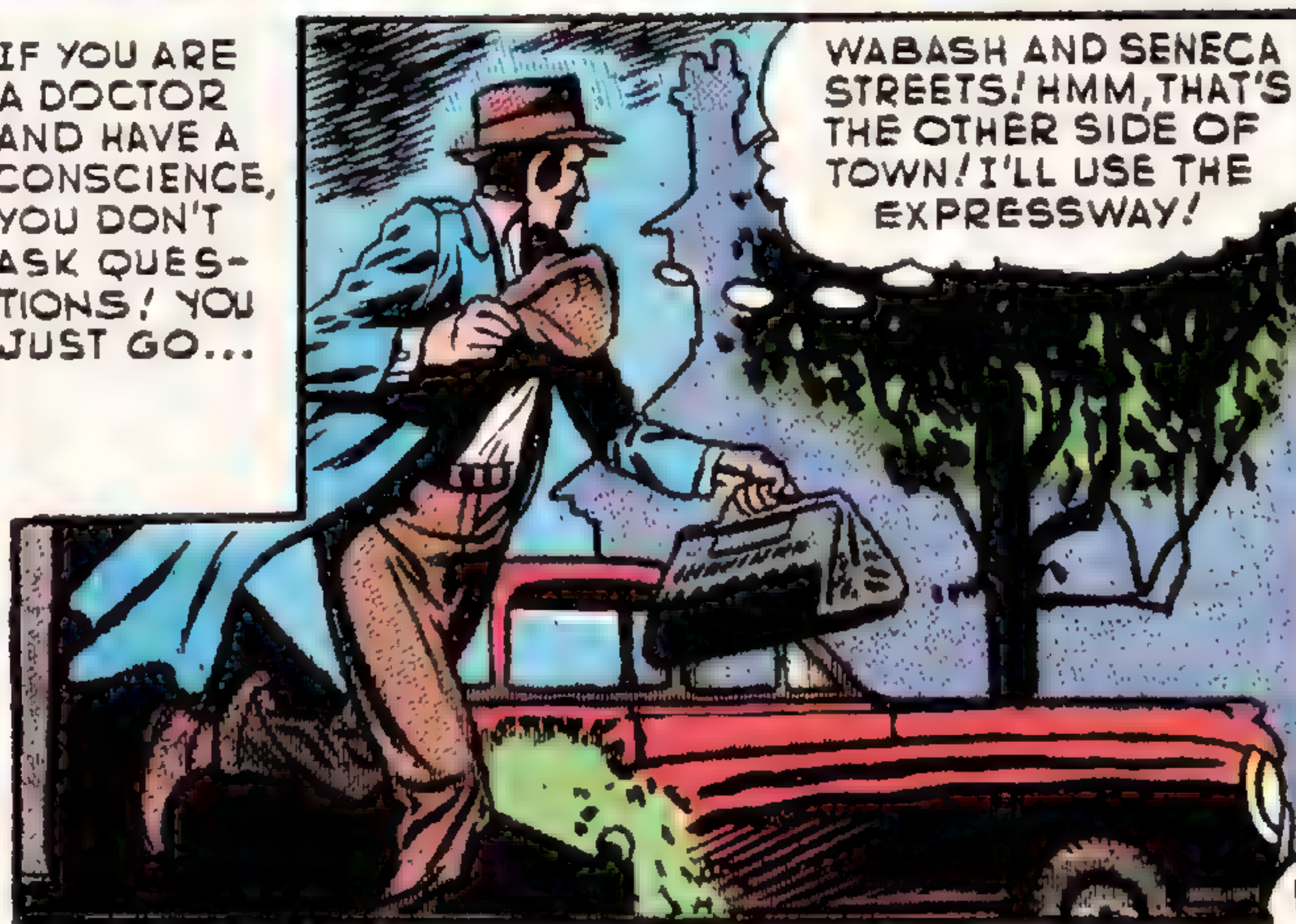


THE PHONE SHRILLED AT EXACTLY 2:00 A.M.!

DR. SLOAN! PLEASE COME QUICKLY! IT'S AN EMERGENCY!

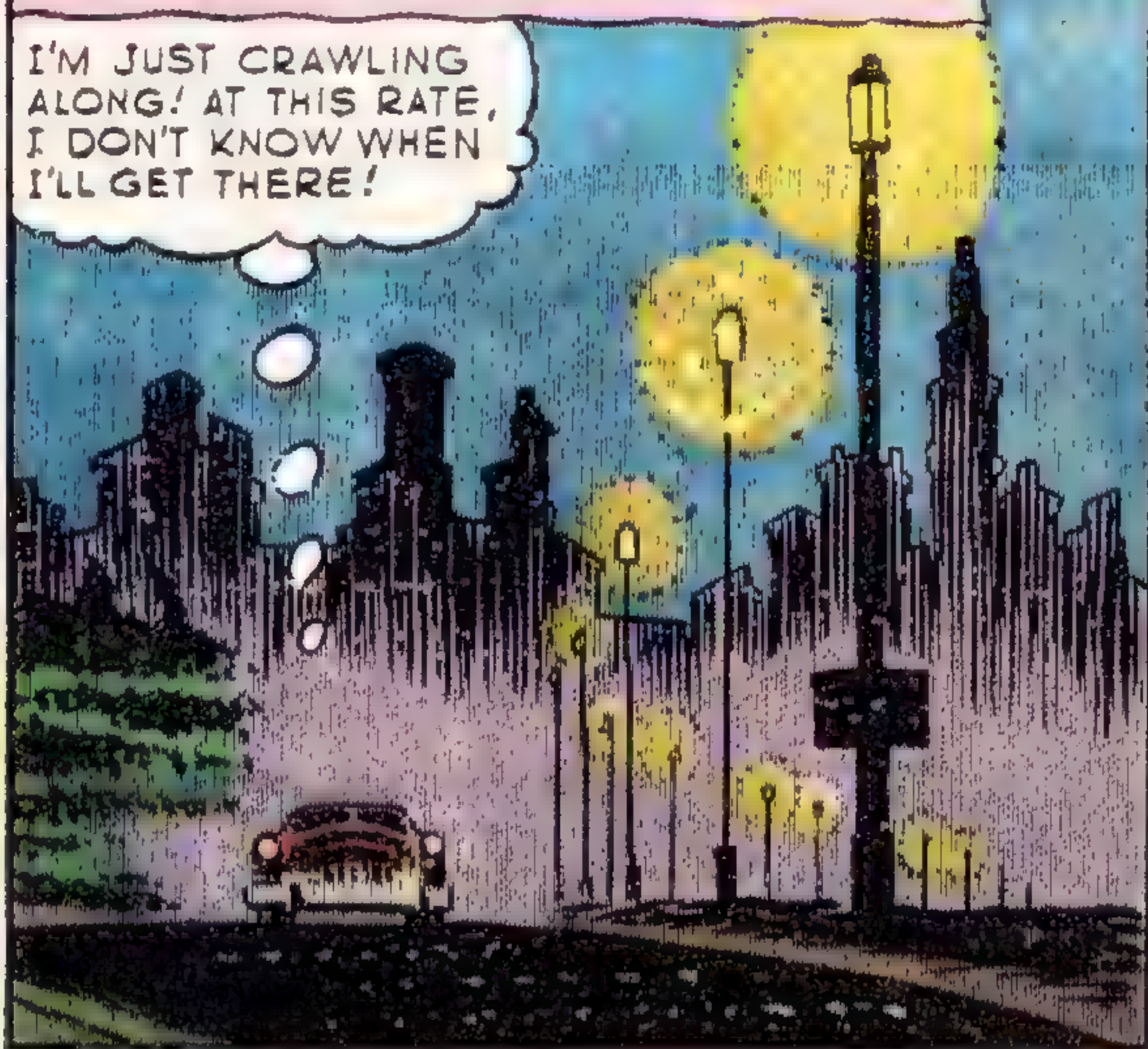


IF YOU ARE A DOCTOR AND HAVE A CONSCIENCE, YOU DON'T ASK QUESTIONS! YOU JUST GO...

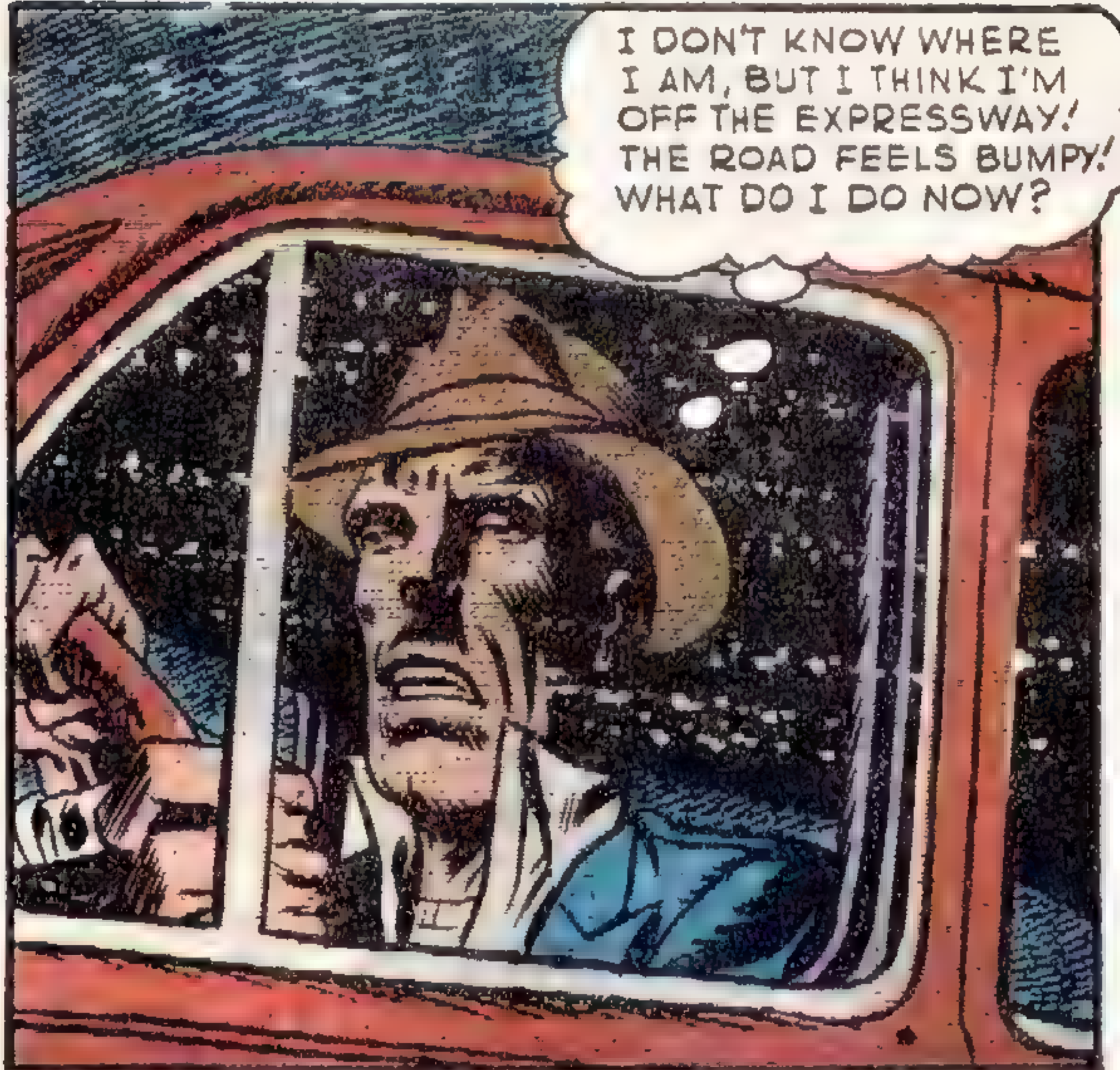


THE FOG TURNED TO A THICK PEA SOUP...

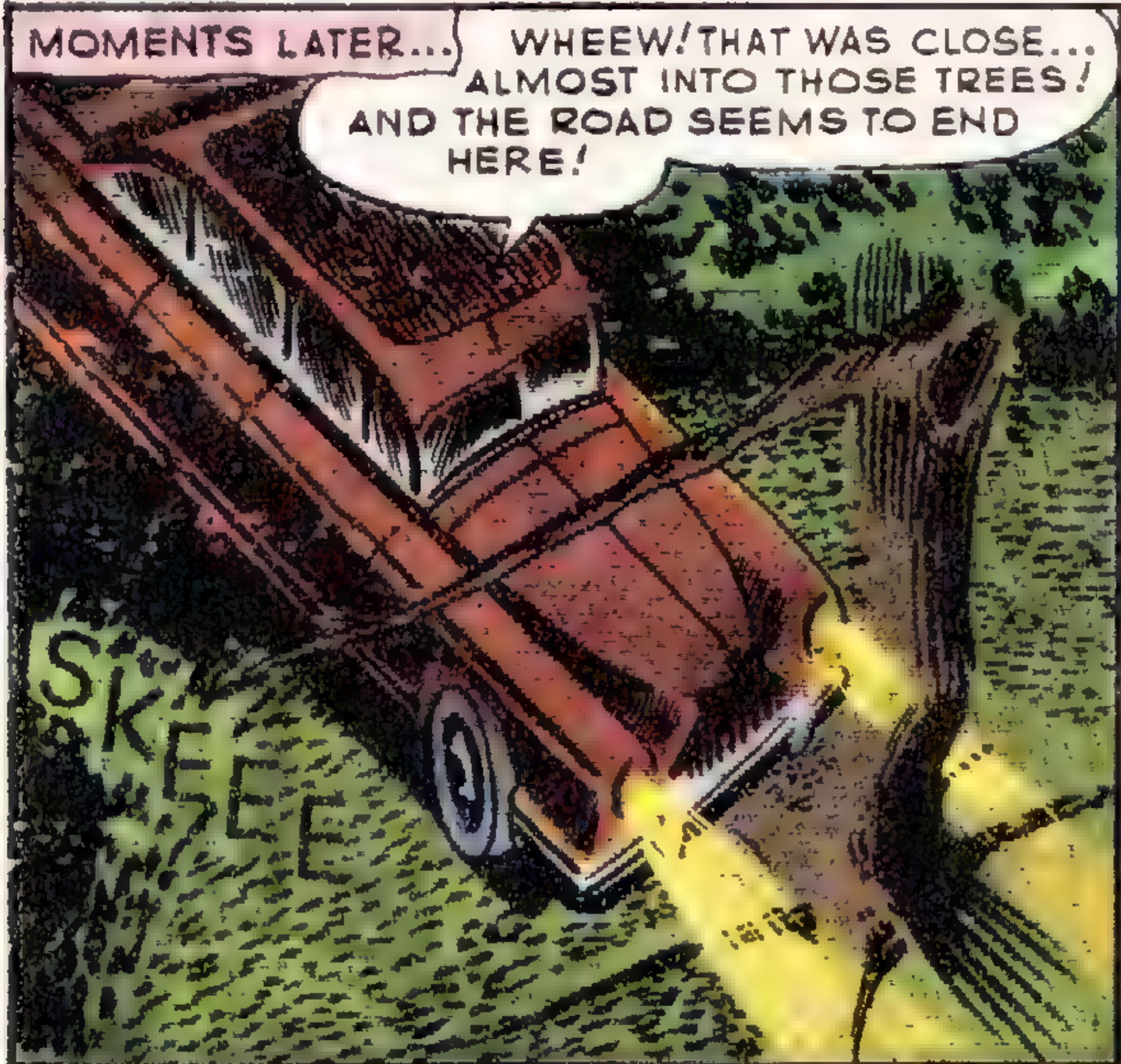
I'M JUST CRAWLING ALONG! AT THIS RATE, I DON'T KNOW WHEN I'LL GET THERE!



I DON'T KNOW WHERE I AM, BUT I THINK I'M OFF THE EXPRESSWAY! THE ROAD FEELS BUMPY! WHAT DO I DO NOW?



MOMENTS LATER... WHEEW! THAT WAS CLOSE... ALMOST INTO THOSE TREES! AND THE ROAD SEEMS TO END HERE!



WHAT A ROTTEN NIGHT! I'M LOST... COMPLETELY LOST!

SUDDENLY, FROM NOWHERE...

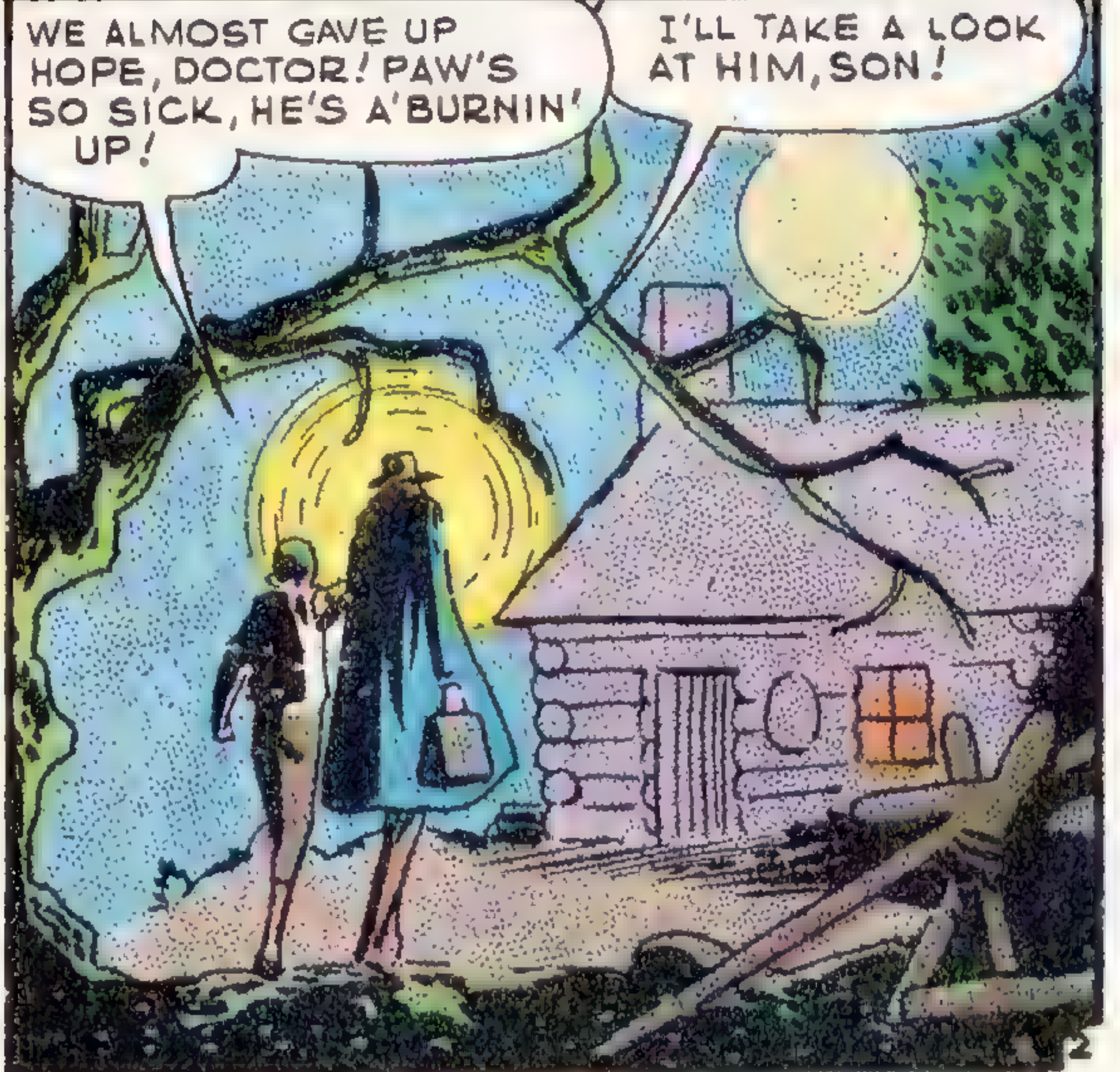
DOCTOR... OVER HERE! COME QUICKLY! WE NEED YOU!

NOW WHO THE HECK... ALL RIGHT! I'M COMING!

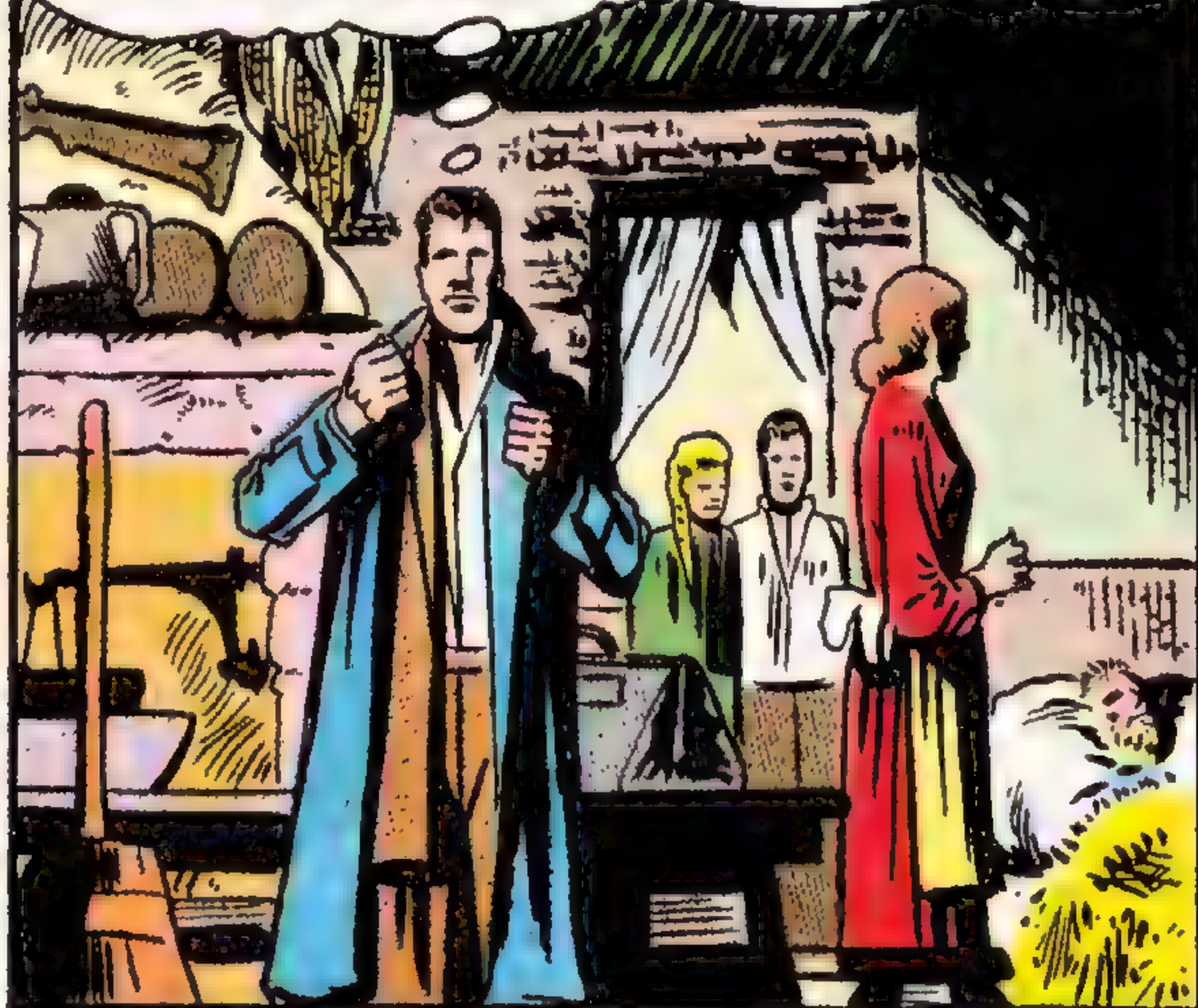


WE ALMOST GAVE UP HOPE, DOCTOR! PAW'S SO SICK, HE'S A'BURNIN' UP!

I'LL TAKE A LOOK AT HIM, SON!



I NEVER THOUGHT ANYTHING SO PRIMITIVE STILL EXISTED... AND NOT AN HOUR'S DRIVE FROM MY OWN HOME!



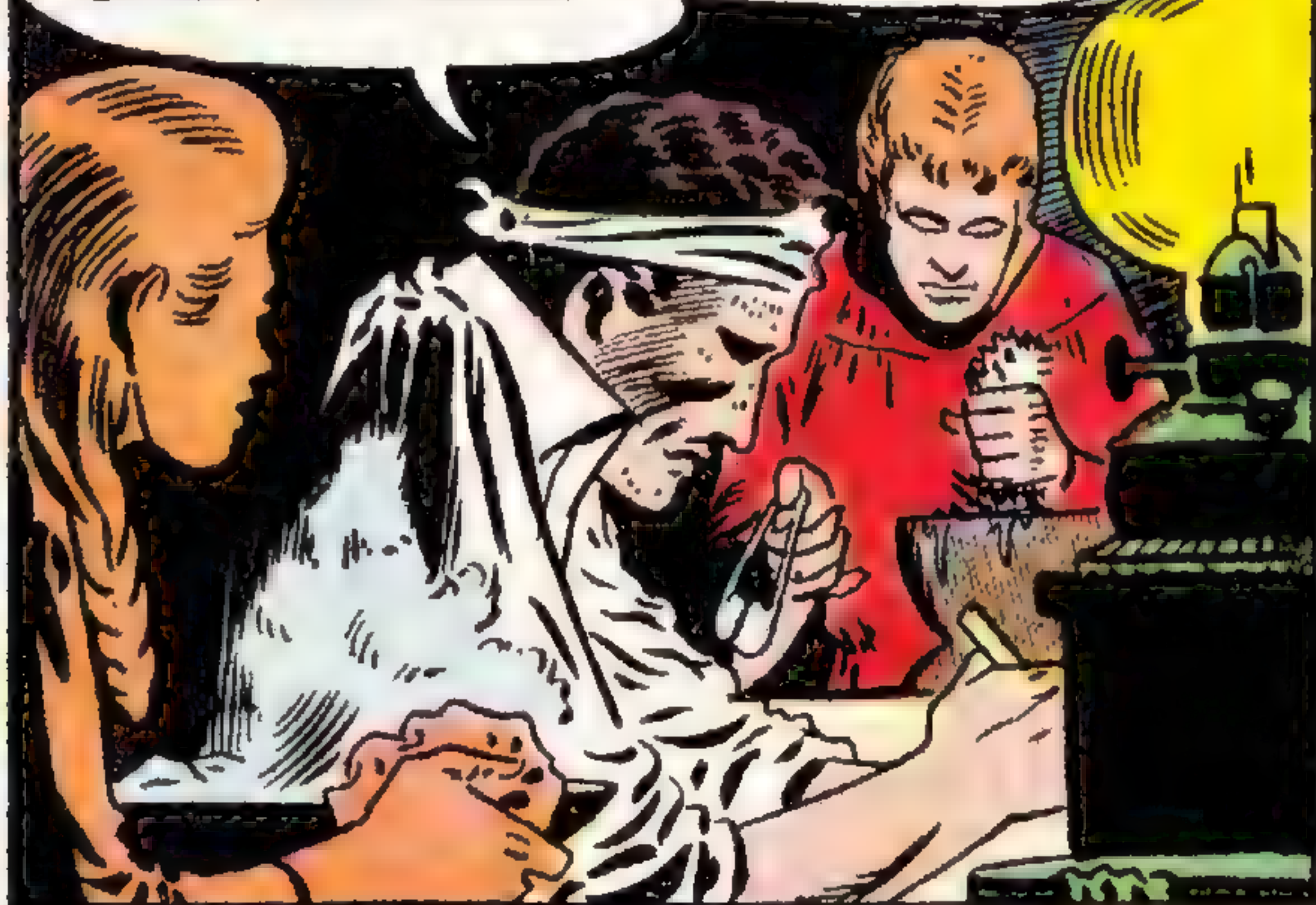
MRS. BRADFORD! YOUR HUSBAND NEEDS AN IMMEDIATE OPERATION! YOU'LL HAVE TO HELP ME IF YOU WANT TO SAVE HIM! GET SOME BOILING WATER AND CLEAN RAGS PREPARED!

ANYTHING YOU SAY, DOCTOR! ANYTHING, JUST SO'S YOU GIT PAW FIXED UP!



IT WAS THE CRUEST OPERATION HE HAD EVER PERFORMED... AN ORDEAL IN THE BACKWOODS...

SOAK THAT TOWEL, MRS. BRADFORD! HAND ME THAT PAIR OF CLAMPS, QUICKLY! OH, WHAT WOULDN'T I GIVE FOR A CLEAN WHITE OPERATING ROOM!



HE'S RALLYING NOW! I THINK HE'S GOING TO BE FINE, MRS. BRADFORD! THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT!

BLESS YOU, DOCTOR! YOU'RE A FINE MAN! I DON'T KNOW HOW TO THANK YOU!



AS HE STARTED TO LEAVE...

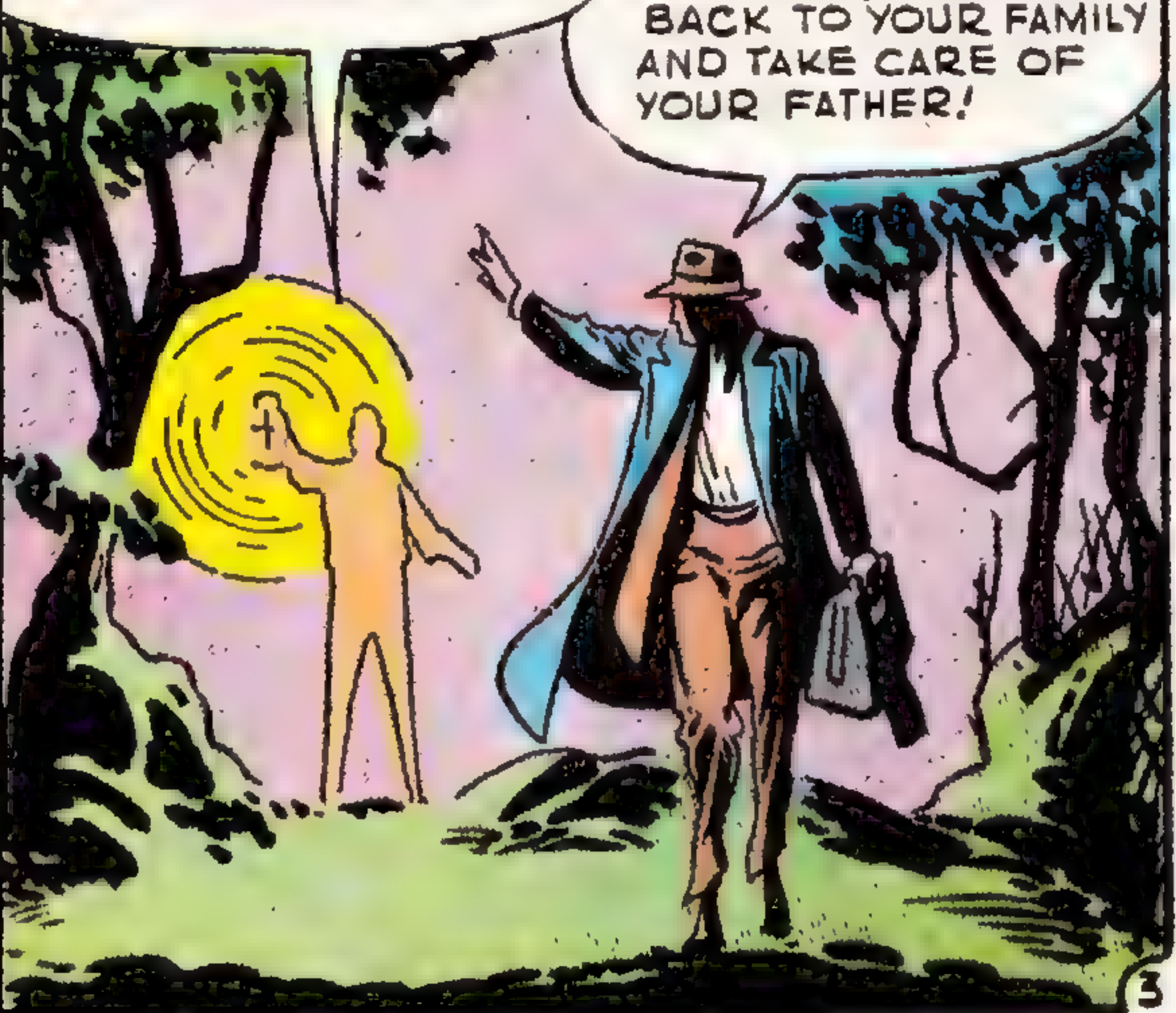
WE CAN'T PAY YOU, DOCTOR, BUT I WANT YOU TO HAVE THIS! IT BELONGED TO MY FATHER! NO, NO YOU MUST TAKE IT DOCTOR! PLEASE!

WHY IT'S BEAUTIFUL! BUT HOW CAN I... WELL, I GUESS I CAN'T ARGUE! THANK YOU, MRS. BRADFORD!



I THINK YOU CAME FROM THISAWAY, DOCTOR! CAN YOU SEE YOUR BUGGY?

MY BUGGY??? OH... YES! I CAN FIND MY WAY NOW, SON! GO BACK TO YOUR FAMILY AND TAKE CARE OF YOUR FATHER!



SOMEHOW HE RETRACED HIS ROUTE TO THE HIGHWAY...

WHAT A NIGHT! THE FOG... THAT PRIMITIVE CABIN... AN EMERGENCY OPERATION! IF IT WEREN'T FOR THIS WATCH, I WOULD THINK IT WAS ALL A DREAM!



SOME MOMENTS LATER...

I'M GLAD YOU CAME, DOCTOR, BUT IT'S SO STRANGE! MY HUSBAND BEGAN TO FEEL BETTER JUST A HALF HOUR AGO!

WELL, LET ME LOOK AT HIM ANYWAY!



THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANYTHING THE MATTER WITH HIM! I THOUGHT IT WAS AN EMERGENCY?

I KNOW IT'S STRANGE, BUT AN HOUR AGO WHEN I CALLED YOU, HE LOOKED SO BAD... HONESTLY I THOUGHT HE WAS DYING!



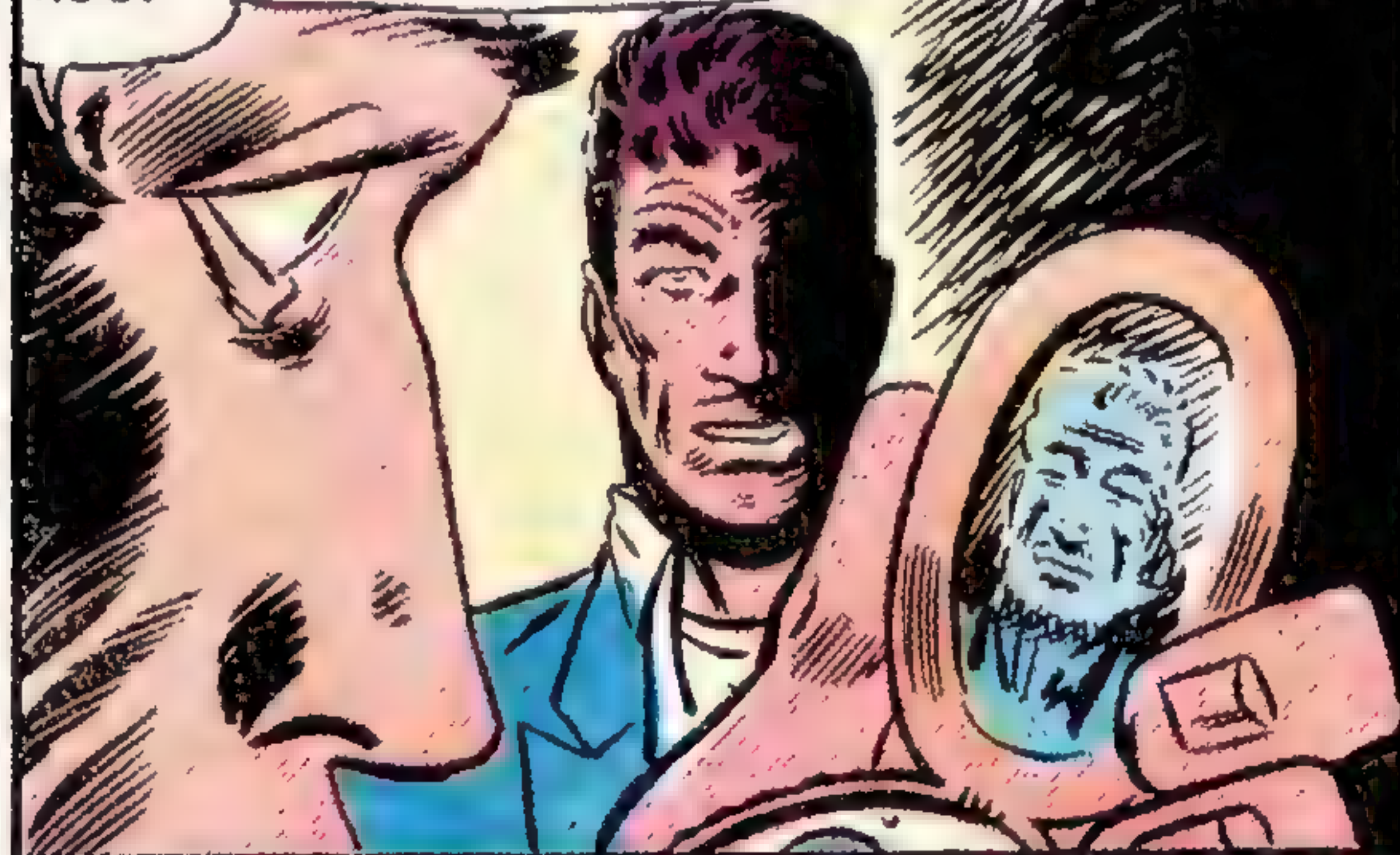
AN HOUR AGO?... WHY SO IT IS ONLY **ONE** HOUR SINCE YOU CALLED! I CAN'T FATHOM IT! I PERFORMED AN EMERGENCY OPERATION IN A LOG CABIN THAT TOOK **HOURS**! AND I RECEIVED THIS WATCH AS A GIFT FROM THE BRADFORDS! YET IT'S ONLY THREE A.M.!

THE BRADFORDS? DOCTOR, LET ME SEE THAT WATCH!



IT... IT'S SO INCREDIBLE, I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! THIS WATCH BELONGED TO PHINEAS BRADFORD, MY MATERNAL GREAT, GREAT GREAT GRAND-FATHER! HERE'S HIS PICTURE! WE HAVE A LARGE OIL PAINTING, JUST LIKE IT! WHY THAT'S MORE THAN 150 YEARS AGO!

THE CABIN LOOKED THAT OLD... AND THE PEOPLE, THEIR DRESS AND SPEECH, CAN ALL THIS BE POSSIBLE?

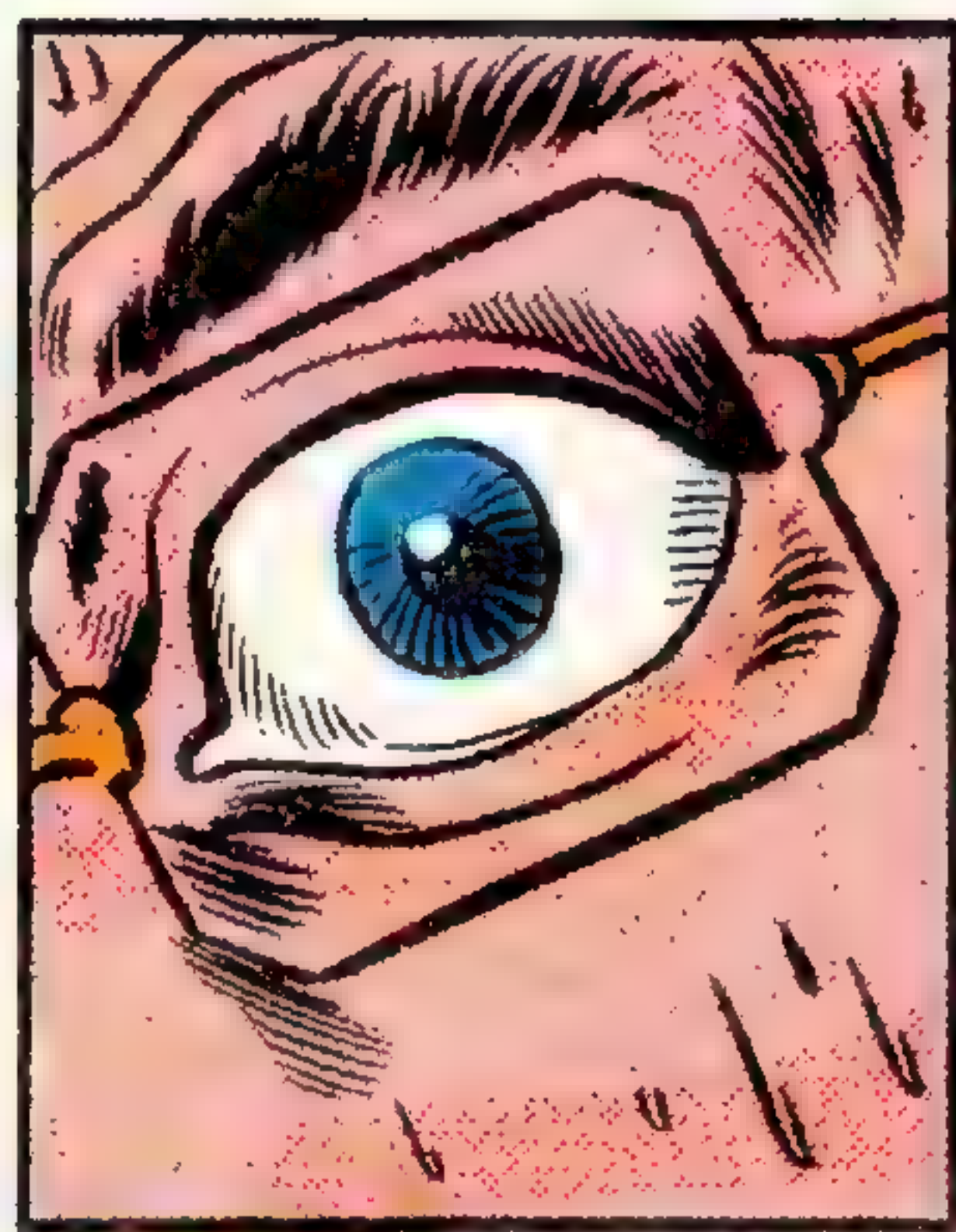


HOW CAN IT BE?

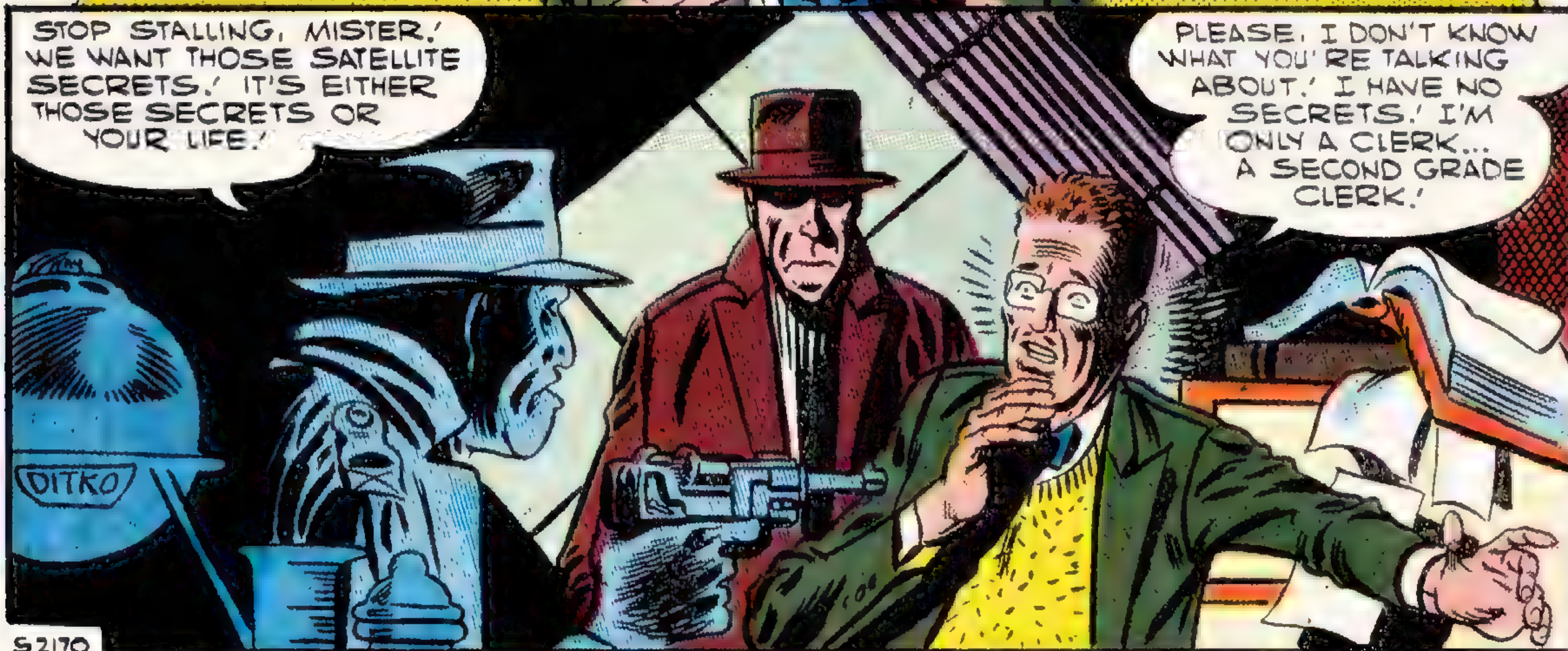
I DON'T KNOW! BUT IT APPEARS THAT I SHUTTLED BACK IN TIME ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS TO SAVE YOUR ANCESTOR'S LIFE! THIS MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR YOU TO LIVE TODAY! AND I HAVE THIS WATCH TO PROVE IT!



END



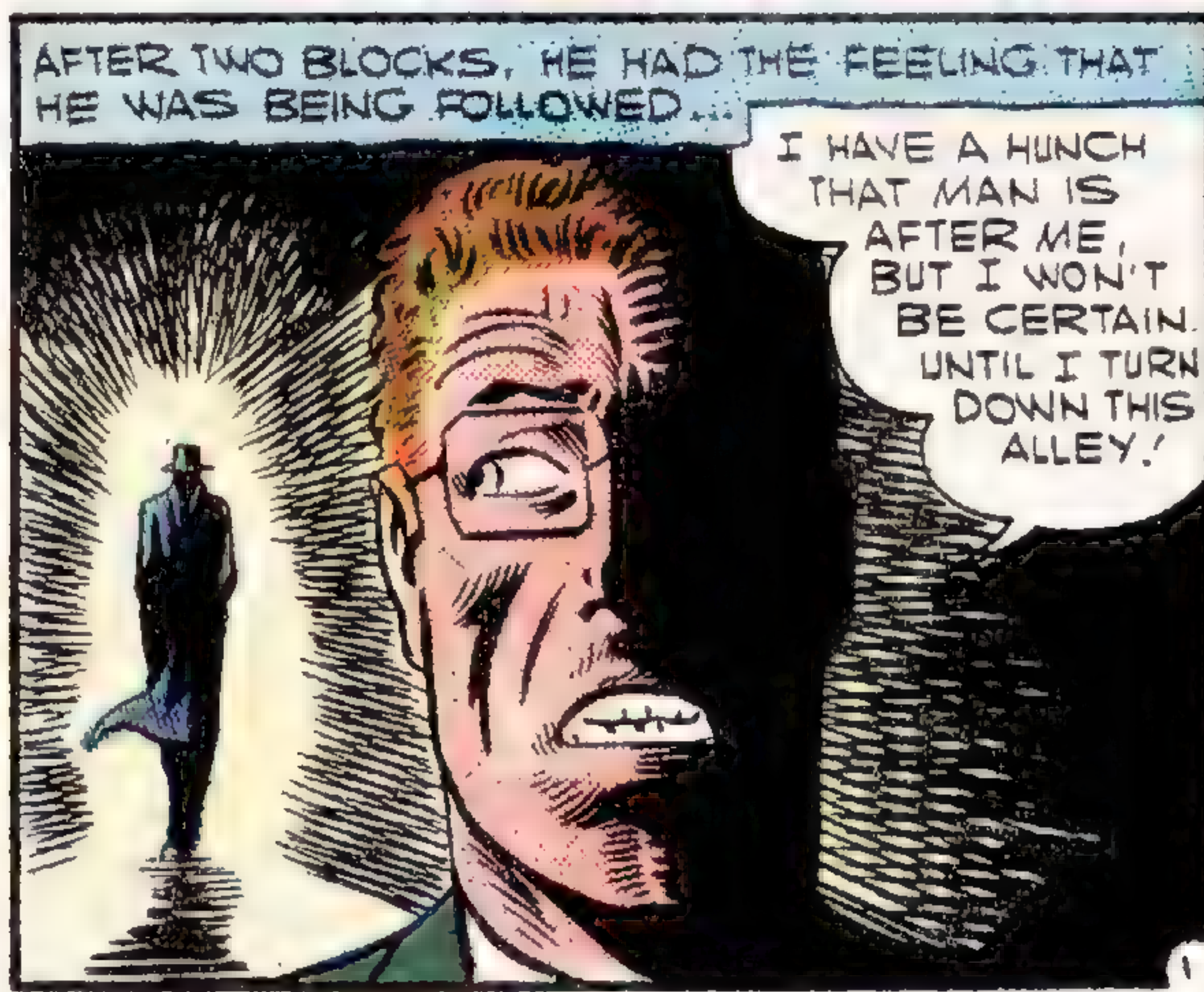
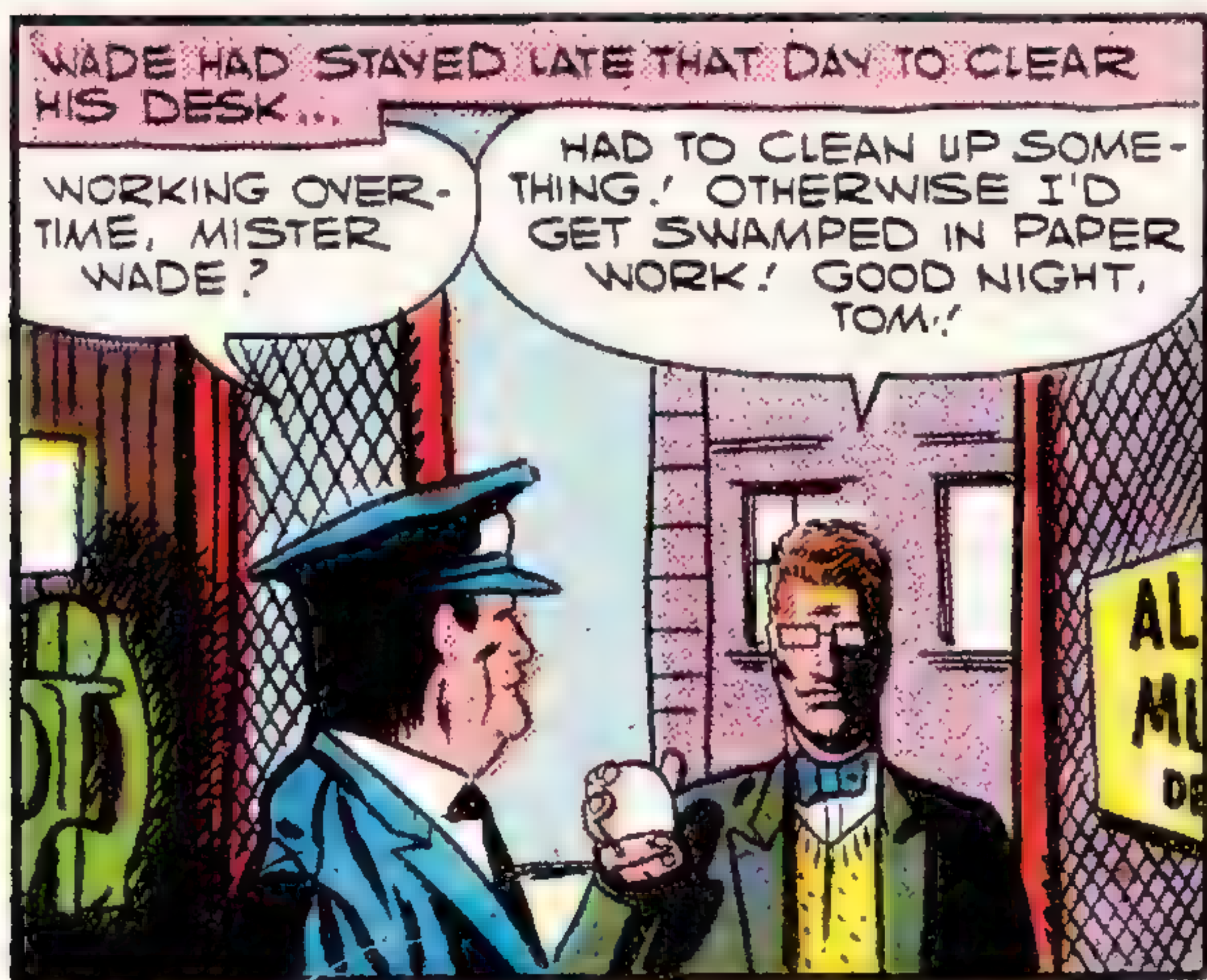
THE ATOMIC CLERK

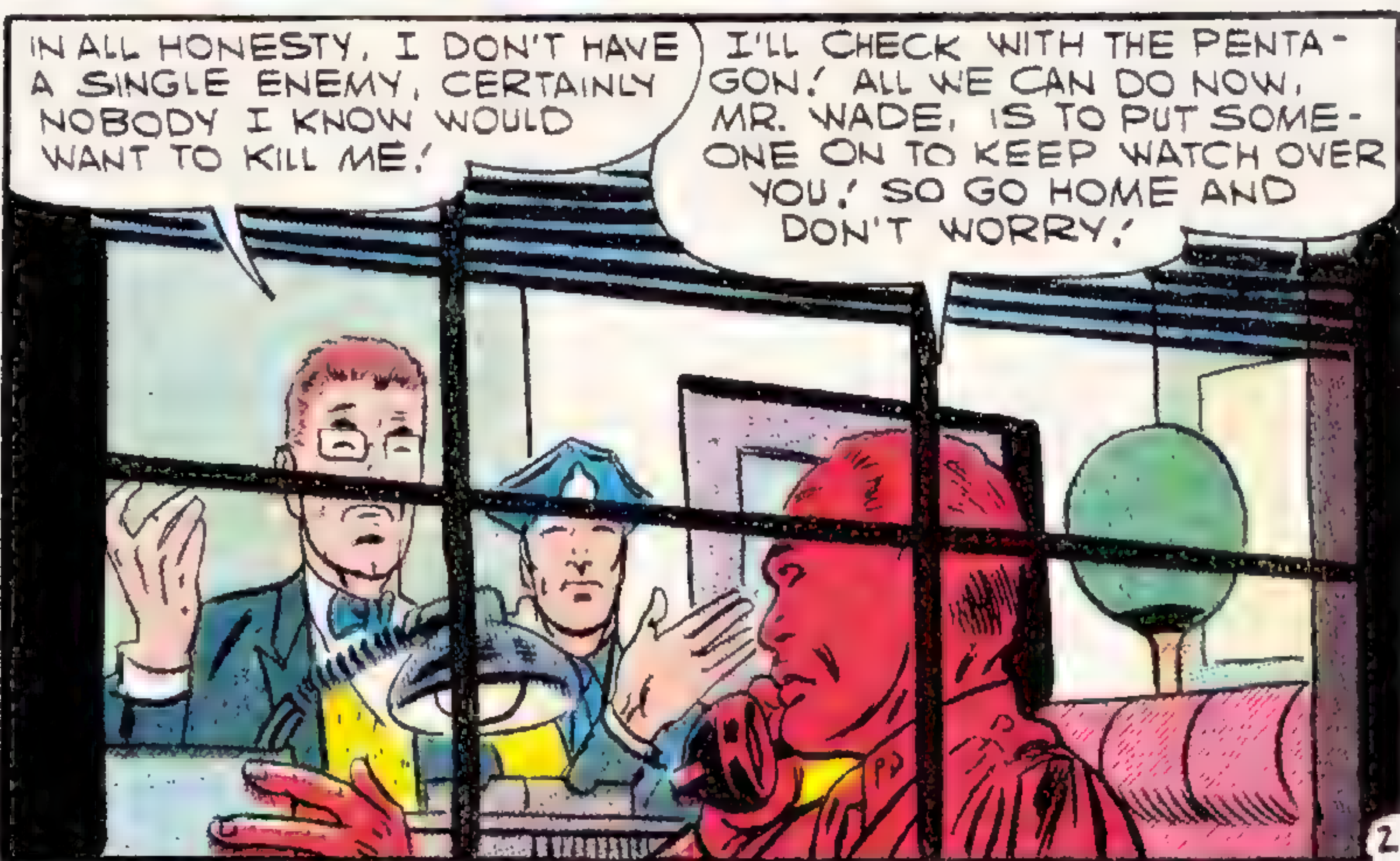
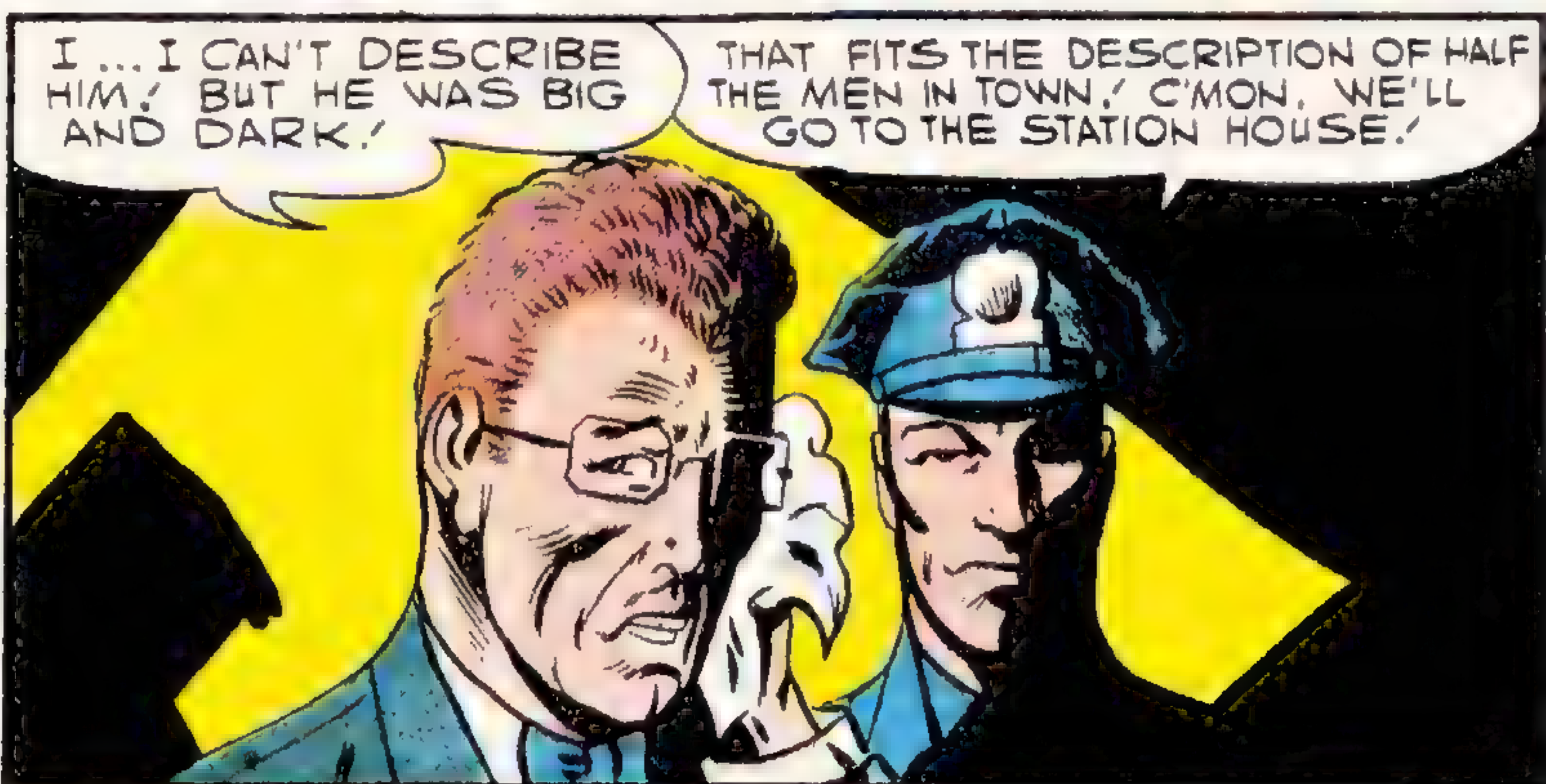
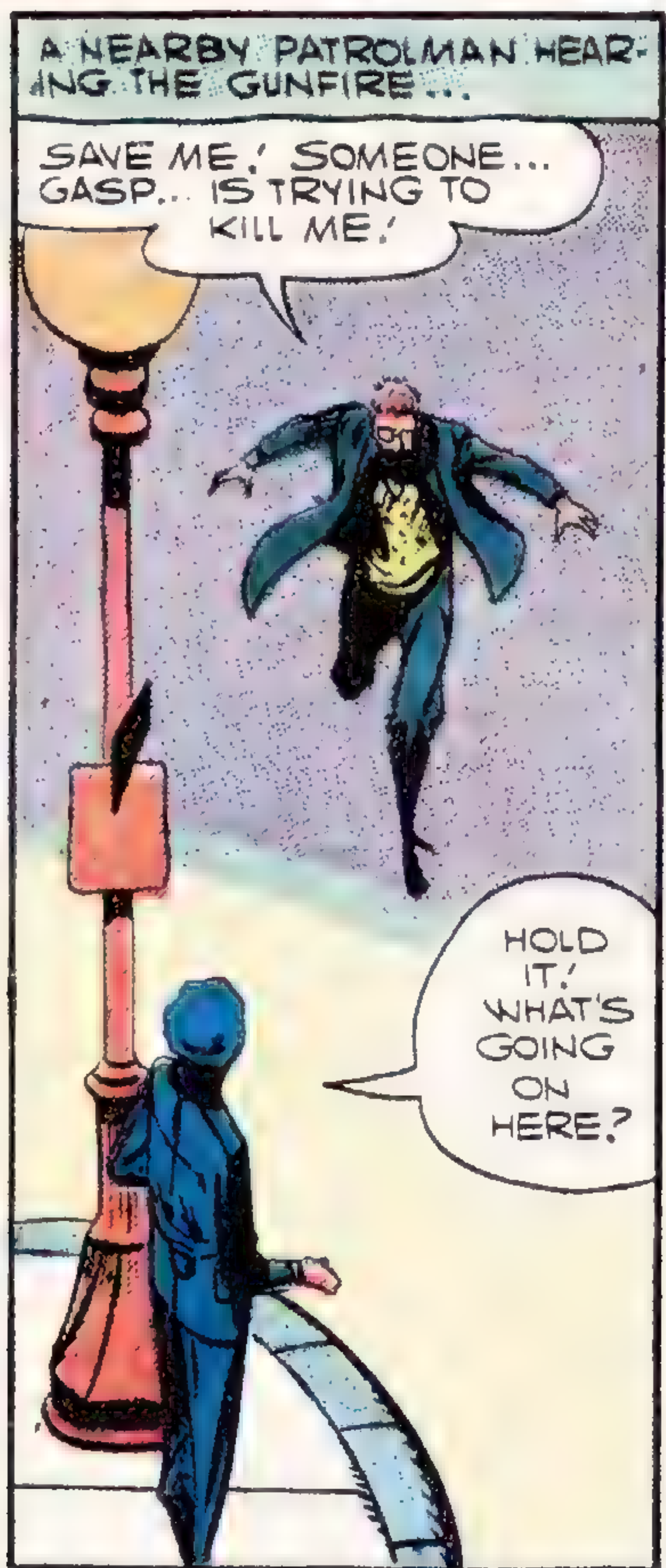
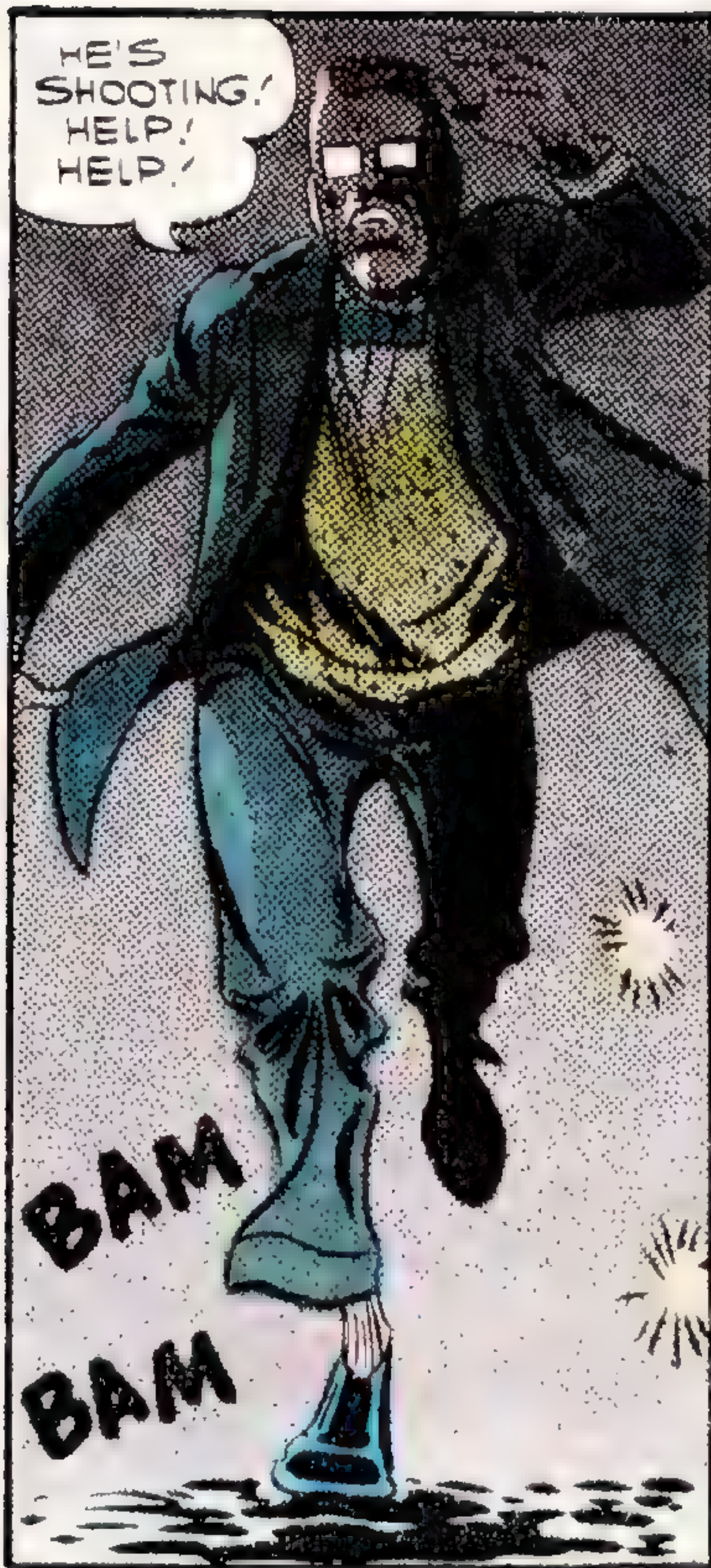
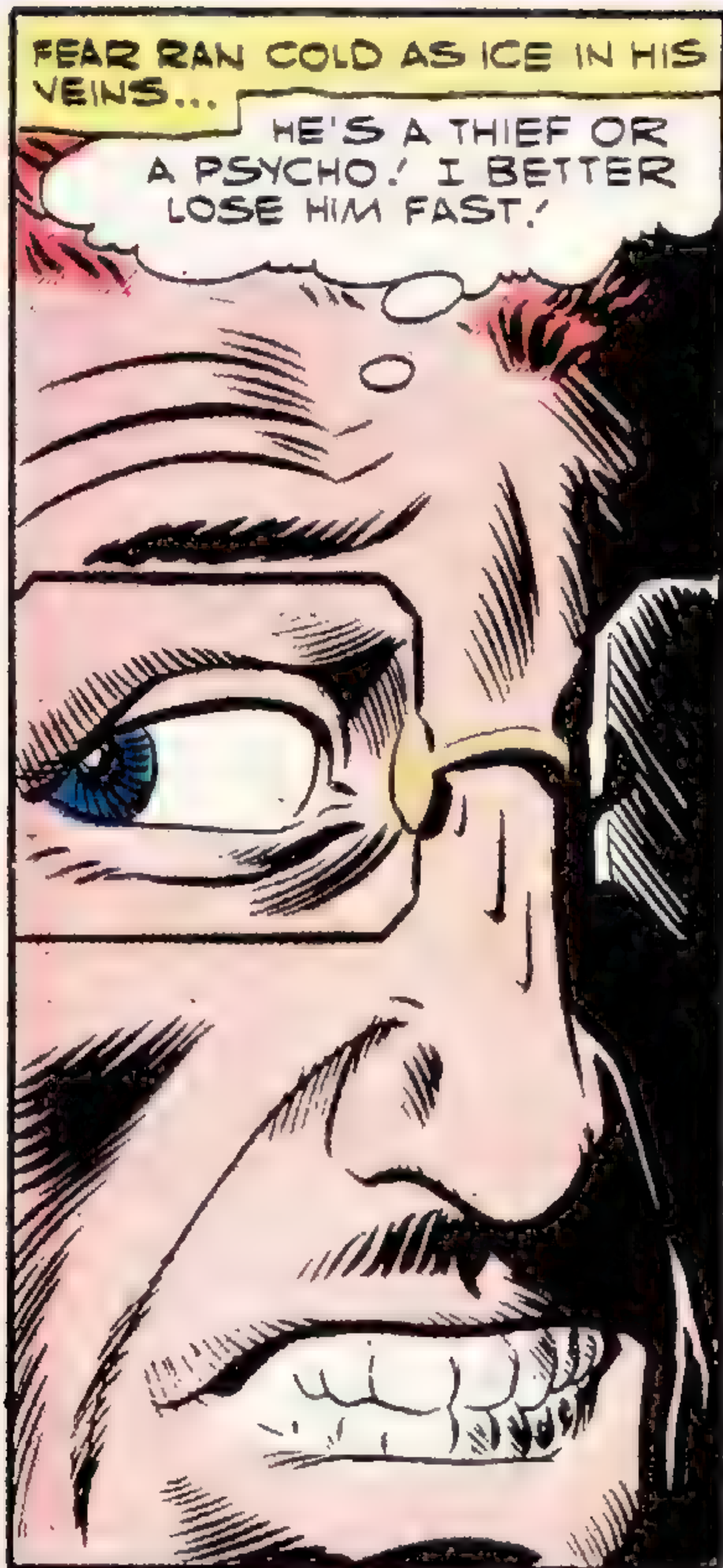


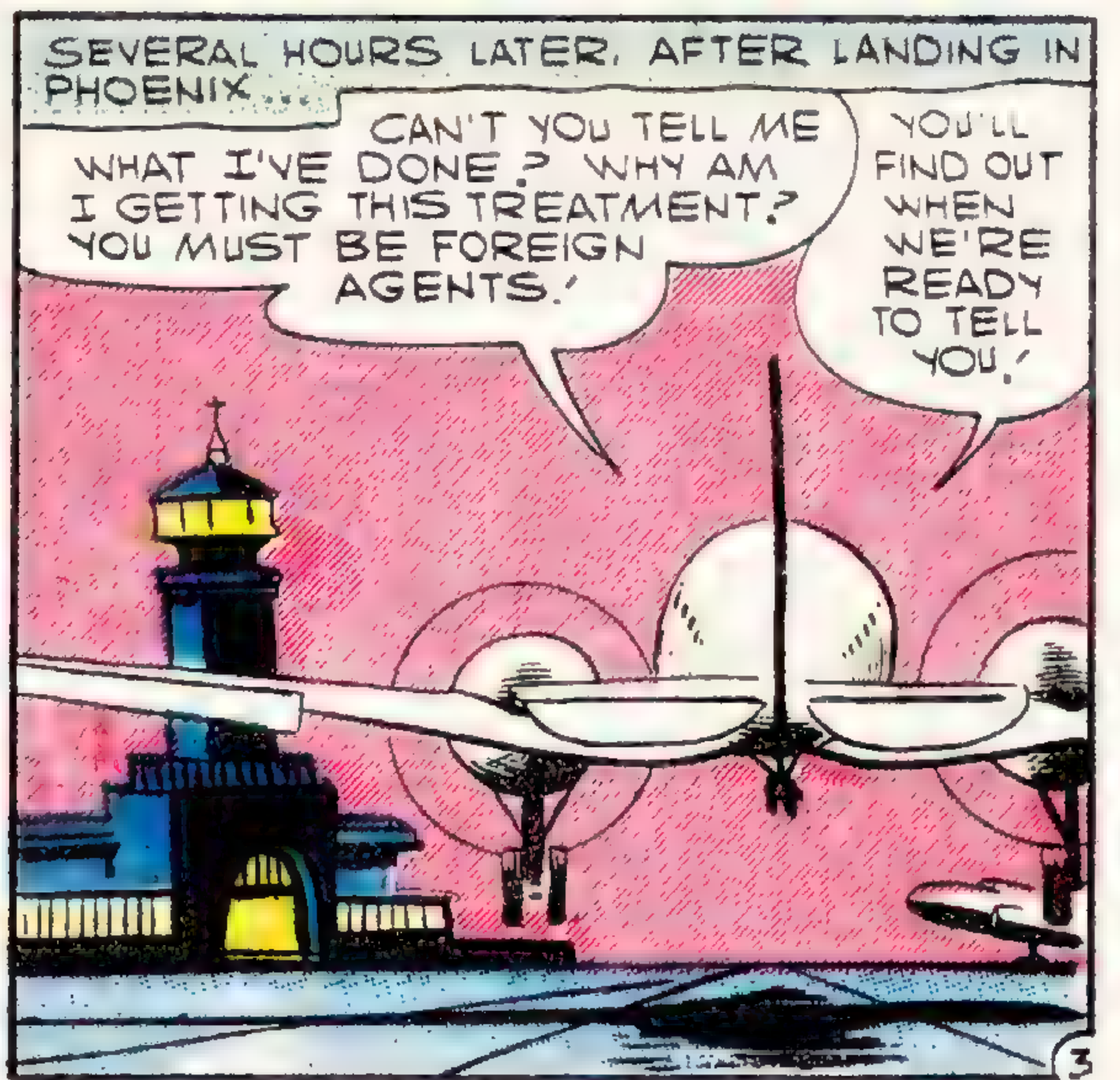
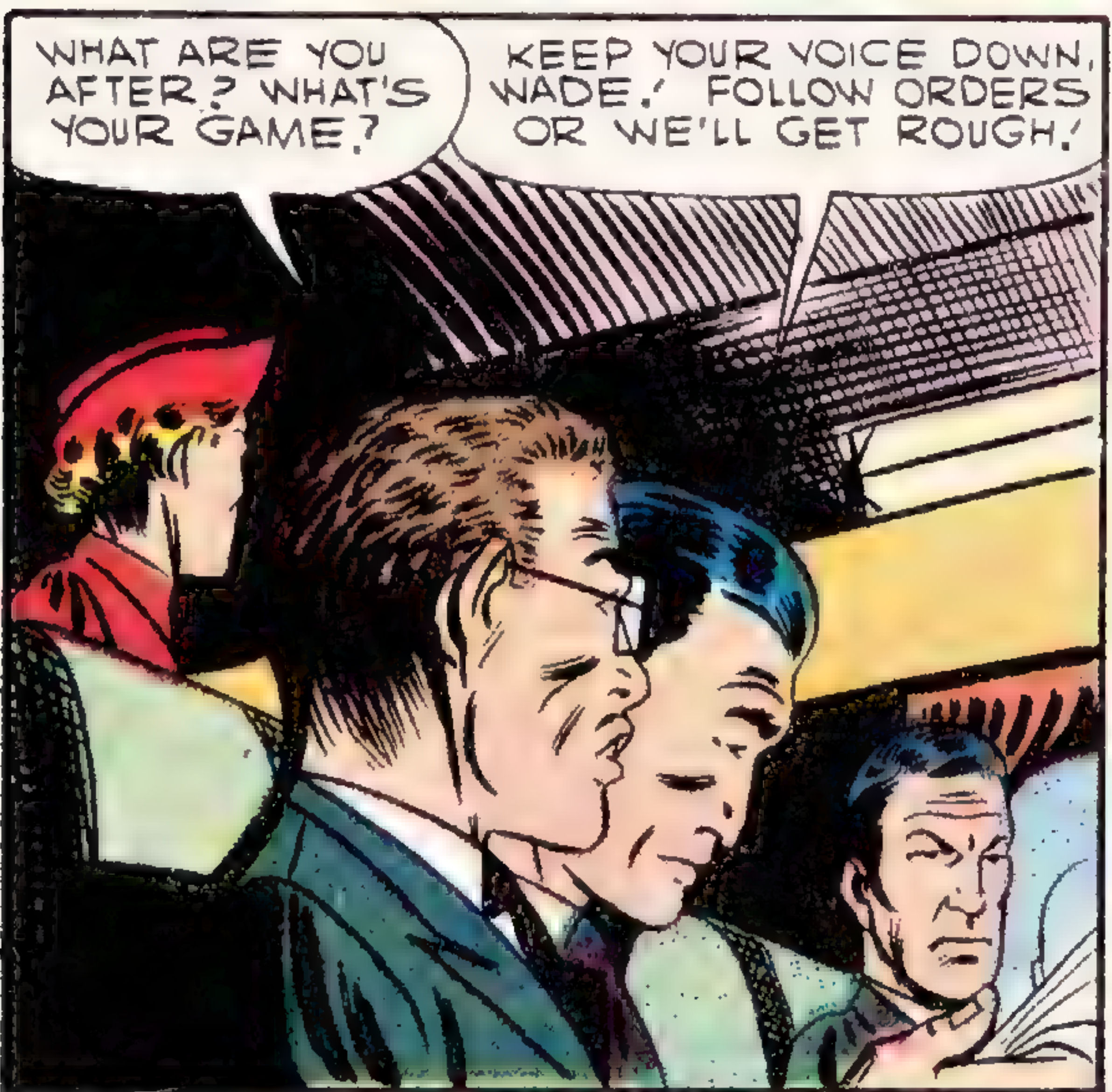
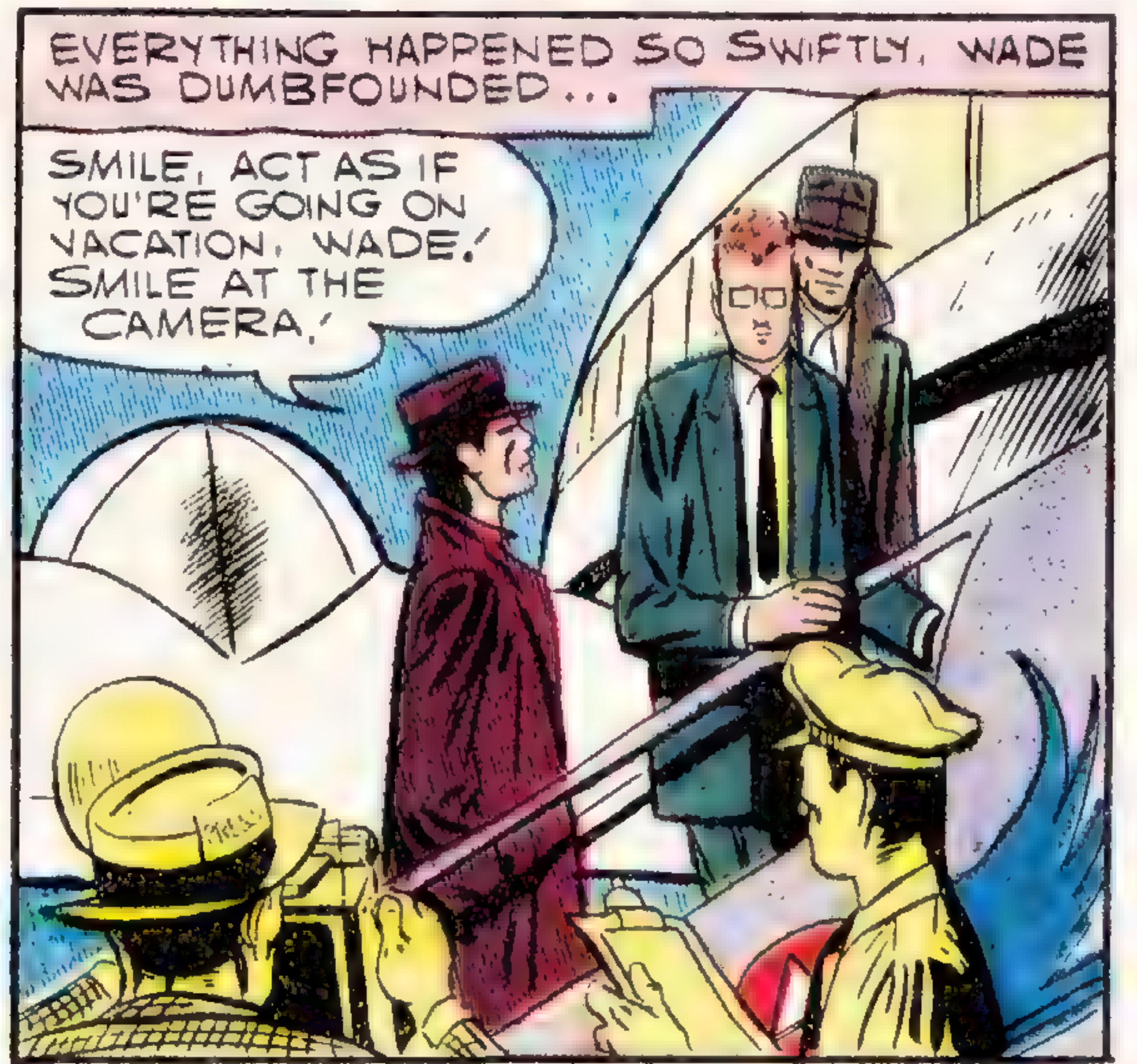
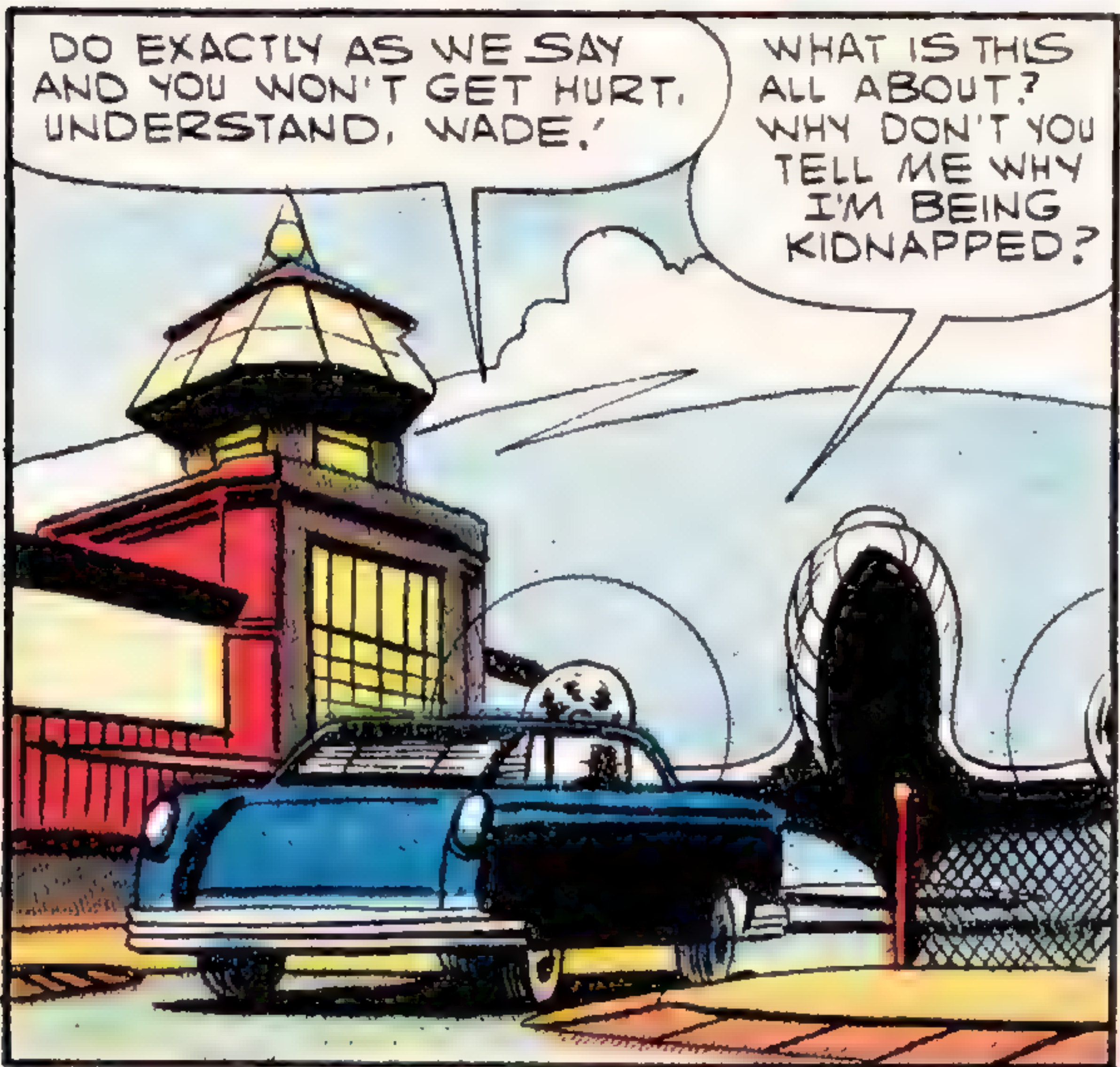
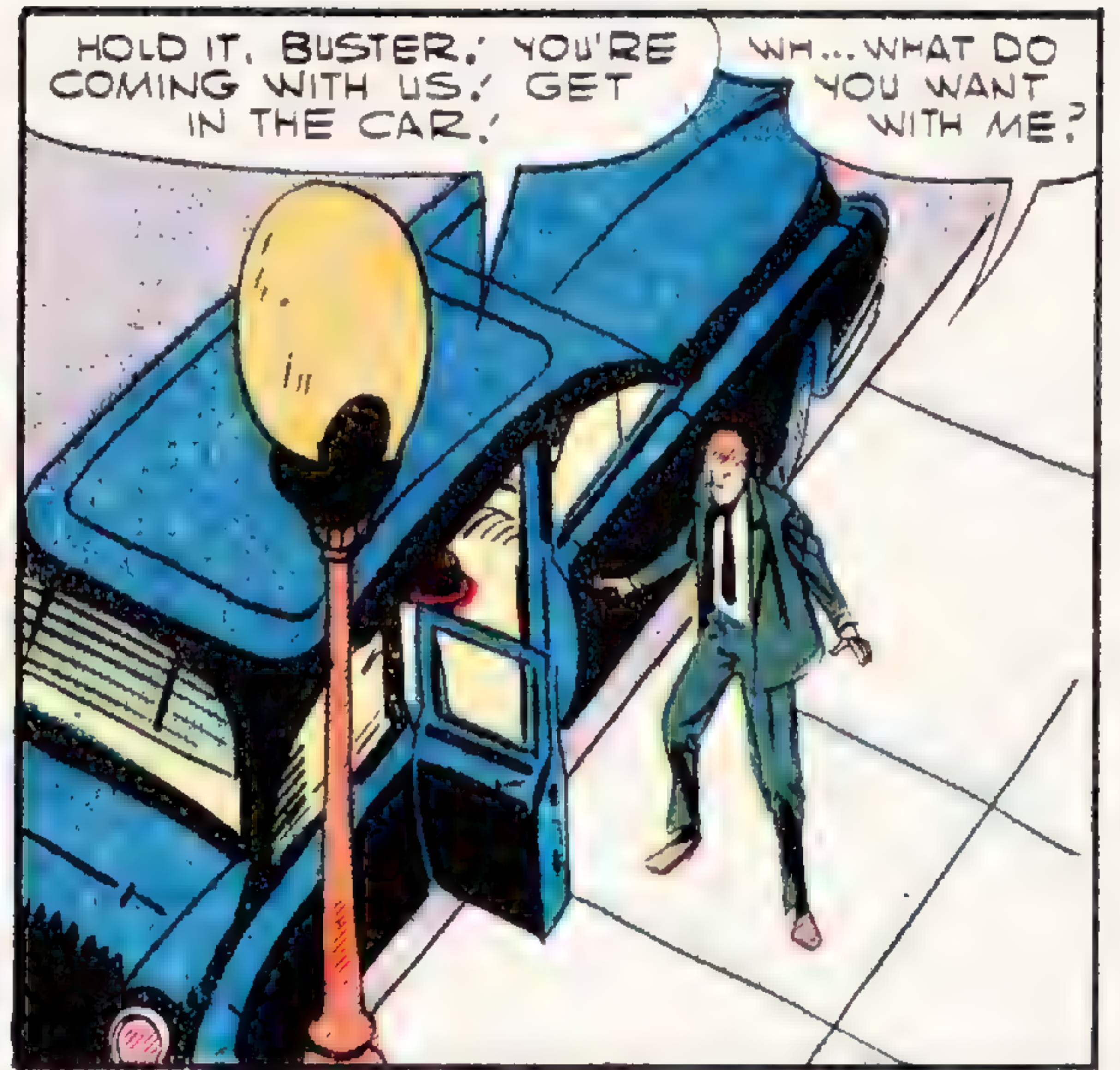
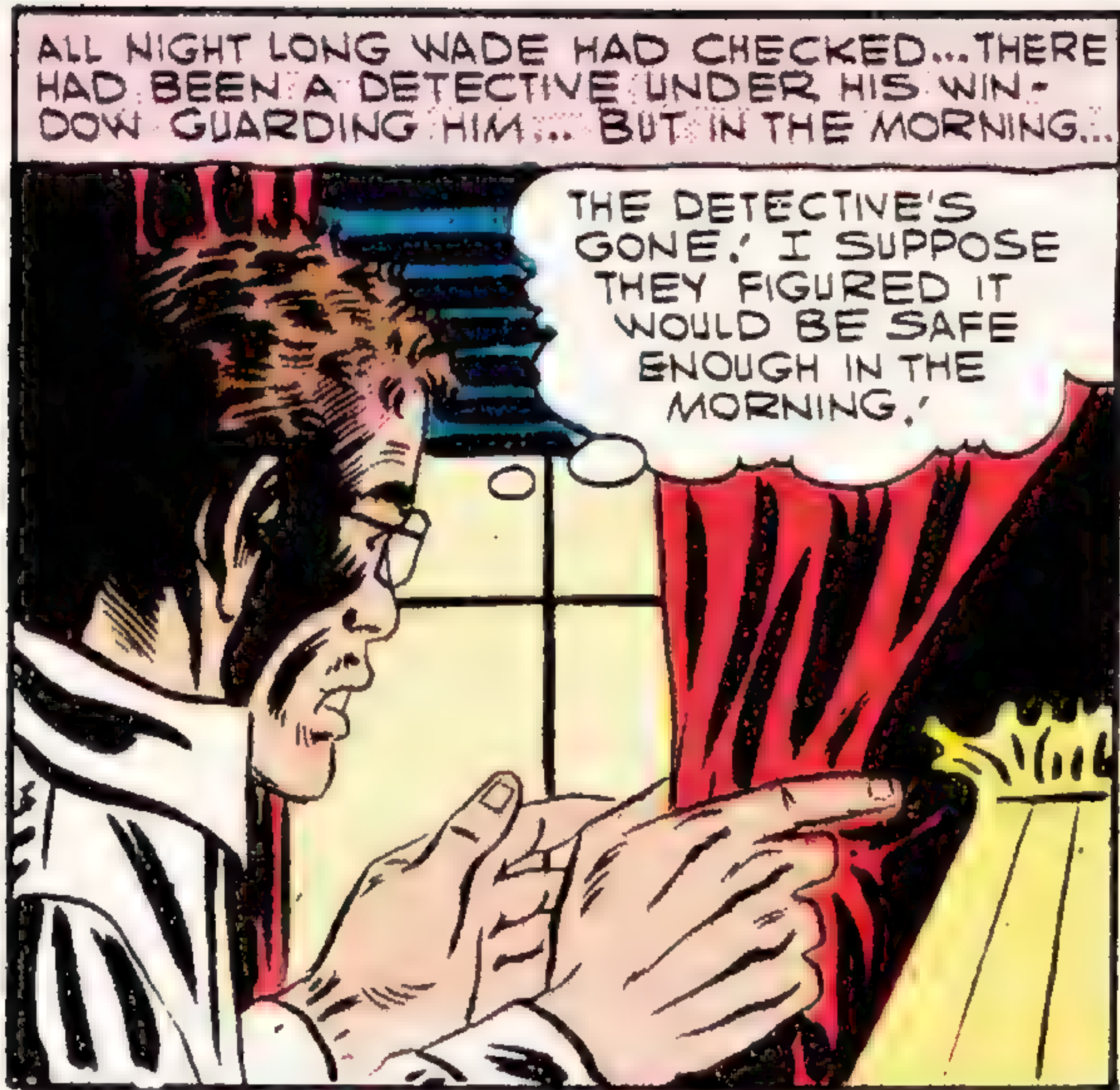
52170

HE WAS A PENTAGON CLERK, A NINE-TO-FIVER. A MILD LITTLE MAN WHO HADN'T HARMED ANYONE IN HIS LIFE. YET SUDDENLY, HIS OBSCURE EXISTENCE WAS SHATTERED BY A CLOAK AND DAGGER DRAMA RIVALING A HITCHCOCK THRILLER.

WHY? WHY? WHY?



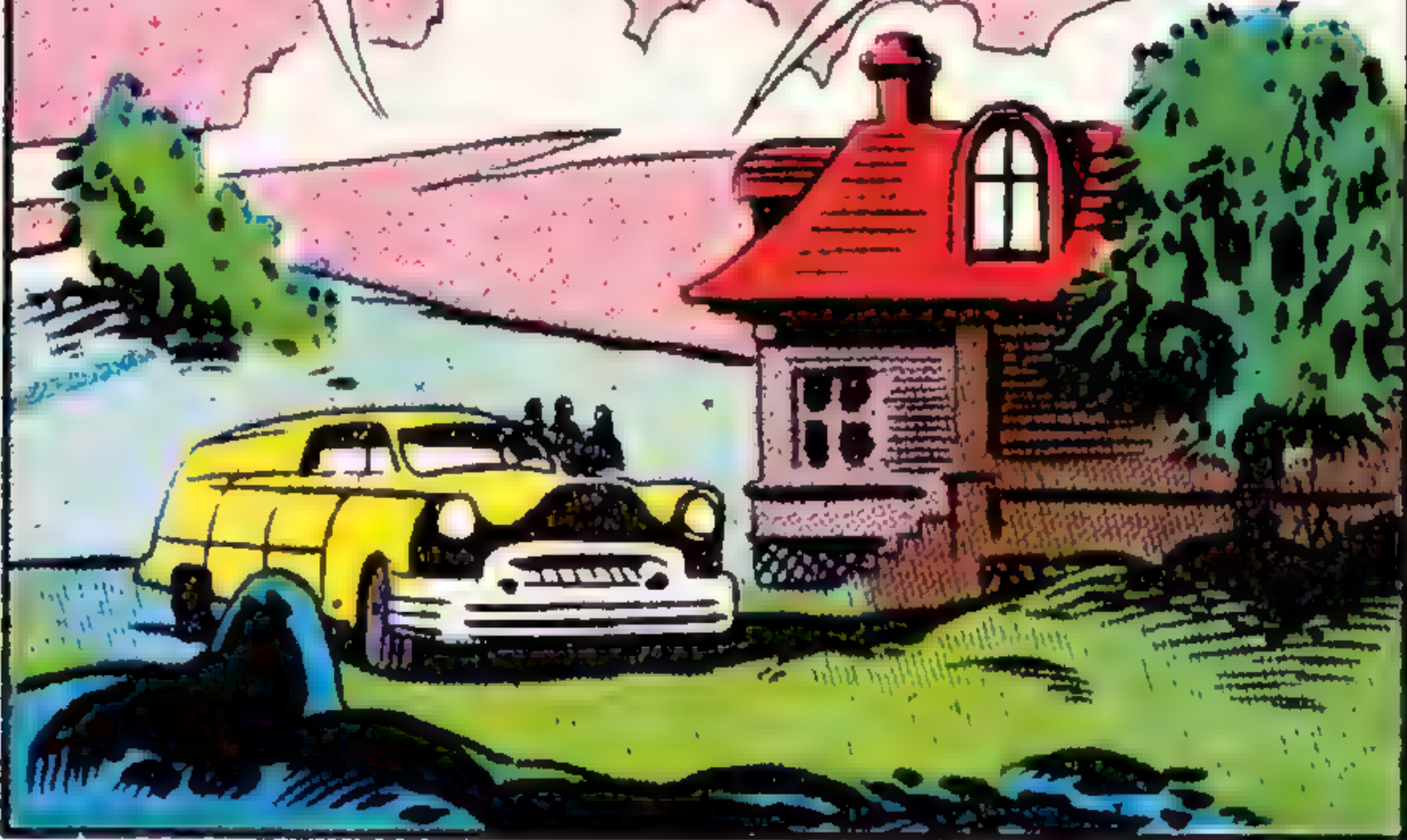




DRIVEN TO THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN, WADE WAS HUSTLED INTO A LONELY HOUSE...

TELL ME, FOR HEAVENS SAKE! WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH ME? I'M NOT IMPORTANT! I HAVE NO MONEY!

ALL WE CAN TELL YOU IS THAT YOU STAY PUT, AND NOTHING WILL HAPPEN TO YOU!



TIMID BY NATURE, EVEN HE COULD NOT TAKE TWO DAYS OF TENSE ANXIETY...

MY NERVES ARE CRACKING! KIDNAPPED IN BROAD DAY-LIGHT WITHOUT CAUSE OR REASON! I'M GOING TO WRITE TO THE F.B.I. -- TO THE PRESIDENT ABOUT THIS OUTRAGE!

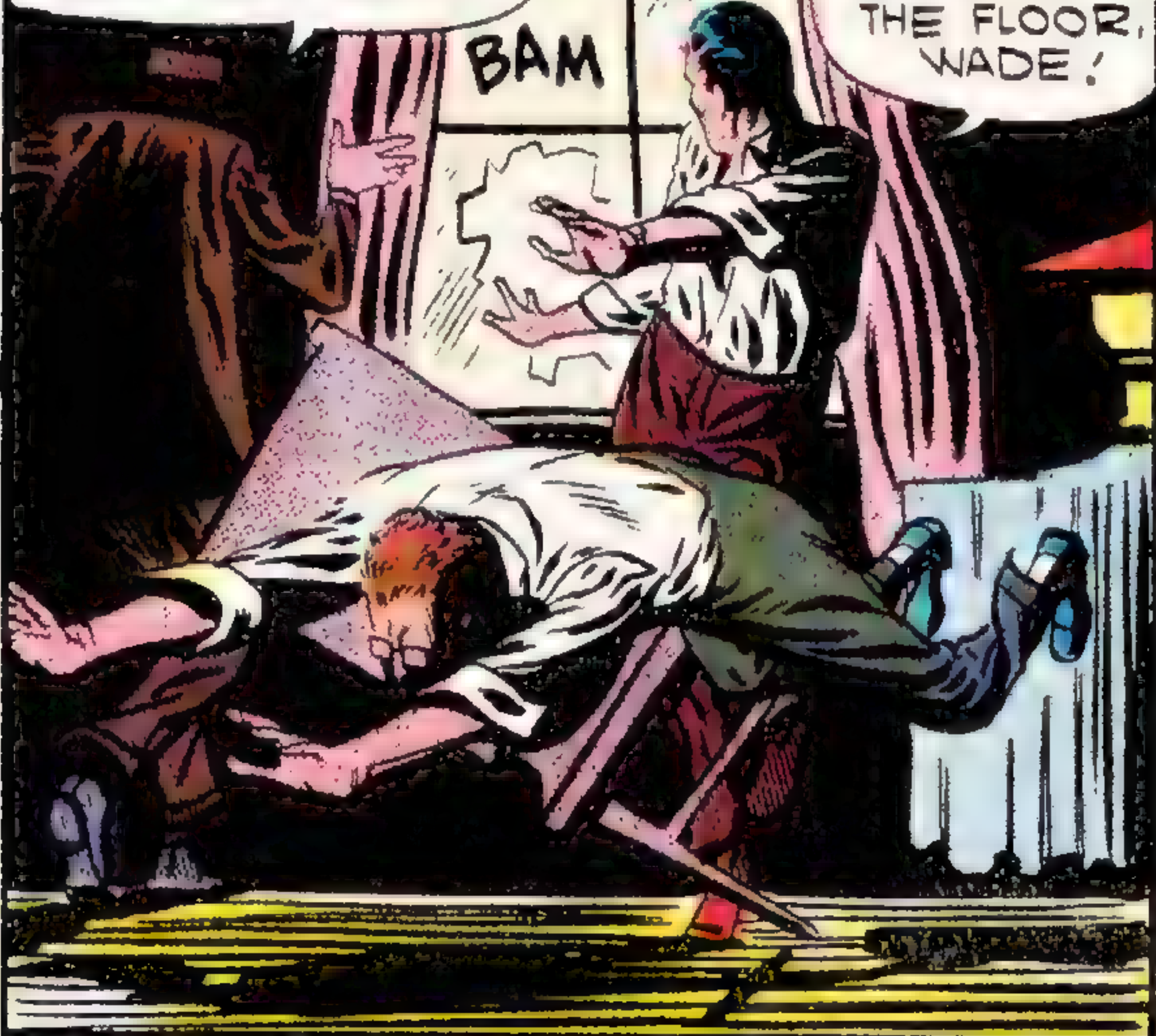
GO RIGHT AHEAD, WADE! BUT IT WON'T GET YOU OUT OF HERE!



THIS MUST BE IT!

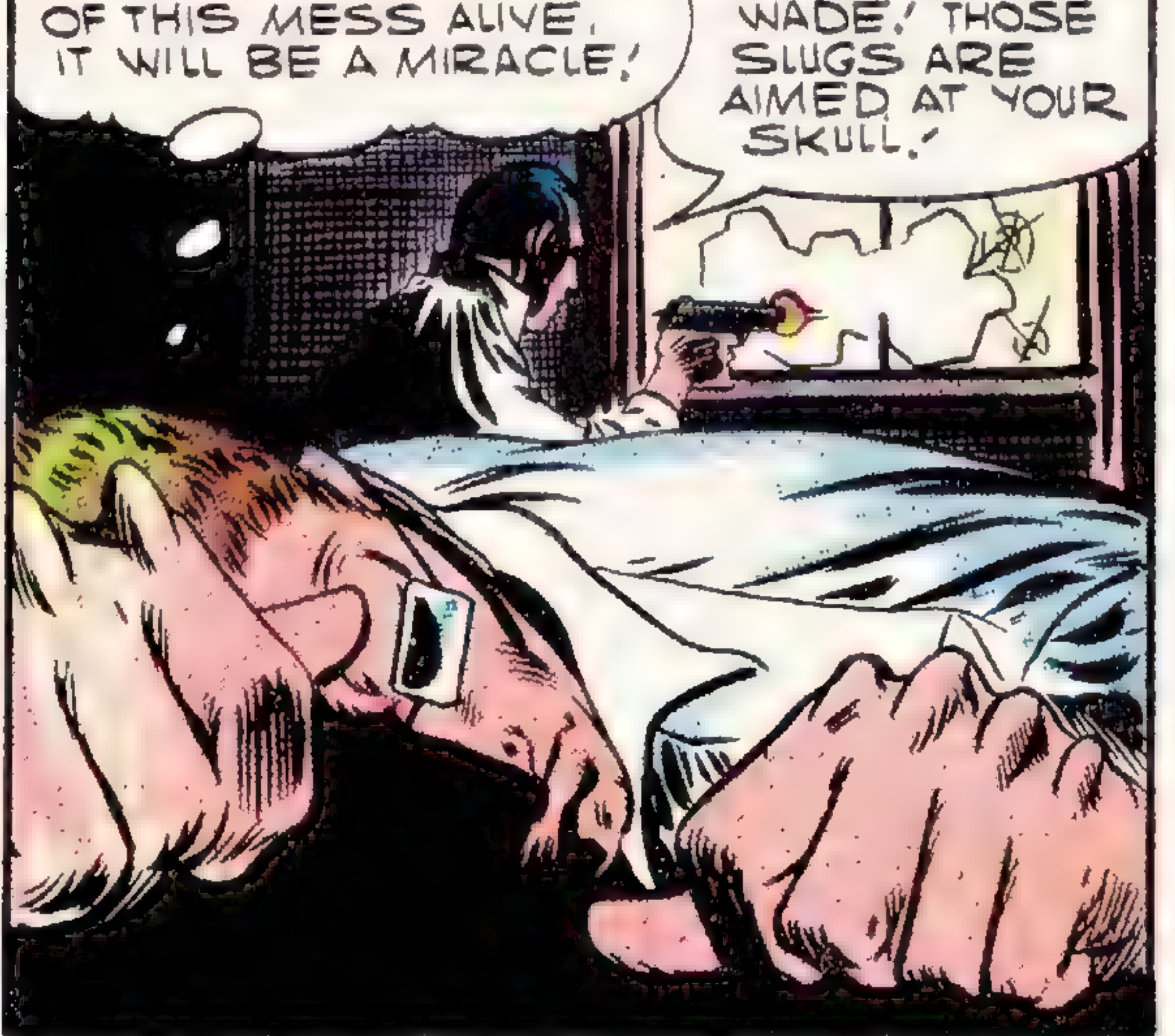
BAM

DOWN ON THE FLOOR, WADE!



IF I EVER GET OUT OF THIS MESS ALIVE, IT WILL BE A MIRACLE!

KEEP DOWN, WADE! THOSE SLUGS ARE AIMED AT YOUR SKULL!



SUDDENLY, A LULL OCCURRED...

WE'RE ALL RIGHT HERE! NOT A SCRATCH!

SWELL! IT'S ALL SEWED UP! NOT ONE OF THEM GOT AWAY!



WHAT DID HE MEAN, ALL SEWED UP? WHAT AM I? SOME SORT OF PING-PONG BALL BETWEEN TWO RIVAL GANGS?

WHAT DO YOU WANT? YOU'RE STILL ALIVE -- NOTHING HAPPENED TO YOU!



AFTER SEVERAL MORE DAYS LIMPED BY --

ALL RIGHT, WADE, GET YOUR THINGS TOGETHER. WE'RE TRAVELING AGAIN.

IT'S ABOUT TIME. THIS SUSPENSE IS KILLING ME. IF I ONLY KNEW WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT.

IN AN HOUR, THEY WERE AIRBORNE ...

WE'RE COMING INTO WASHINGTON. THE FIRST THING I'M GOING TO DO IS CONTACT THE POLICE... THAT IS UNLESS YOU INTEND TO DO AWAY WITH ME.

YOU'RE VERY IM-PATIENT. MAYBE IF YOU KEEP QUIET, WADE, YOU'LL LEARN SOMETHING.

STILL UNHARMED, WADE WAS TAKEN DIRECTLY HOME ...

STILL, THERE'S A LAW AGAINST FORCIBLE DETENTION AND SEIZURE IN THIS COUNTRY. NOW WILL YOU TELL ME WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT.

WE'RE GOING NOW, WADE. LOOK AT THIS PAPER AND TAKE THIS ENVELOPE. MAYBE FROM THESE YOU CAN PUT THE JIGSAW PUZZLE TOGETHER.

WH - WHY... MORLEY'S MY EXACT DOUBLE.

ARMY LAUNCHES SECRET SATELLITE

PROFESSOR MORLEY'S INVENTION NOW IN SPACE.

PROFESSOR MORLEY

CONFUSION WAS ADDED WHEN SOMETHING DROPPED OUT OF THE LETTER ...

A MEDAL? THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS? WHY? WHAT HAVE I DONE? THERE MUST BE SOME MISTAKE.

IT WAS NO MISTAKE! THE LITTLE PENTAGON CLERK WAS A HERO DESPITE HIMSELF...

IT'S FROM THE WAR DEPARTMENT... "OUR SINCERE APOLOGIES FOR FORCIBLY DETAINING YOU. YOUR PRESENCE AS A DECOY FOR PROFESSOR WYATE MORLEY ENABLED US TO DESTROY AN IMPORTANT ESPIONAGE GROUP. YOU HAVE SERVED YOUR COUNTRY WELL, AND WE ARE PROUD..."

END

OUT OF THIS WORLD

TALES OF THE UNKNOWN

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

FANTASTIC

DIFFERENT

No 6

OUT OF THIS WORLD

A CHARLTON PUBLICATION



UNUSUAL

STRANGE

DITKO

VANDERCOOK

OUT OF THIS
WORLD # 6



OUT OF THIS WORLD

TALES OF THE UNKNOWN

FANTASTIC

DIFFERENT
No 6

OUT OF THIS WORLD

A CHARLTON PUBLICATION

10¢



UNUSUAL

STRANGE

DITKO

VANDERCOOK

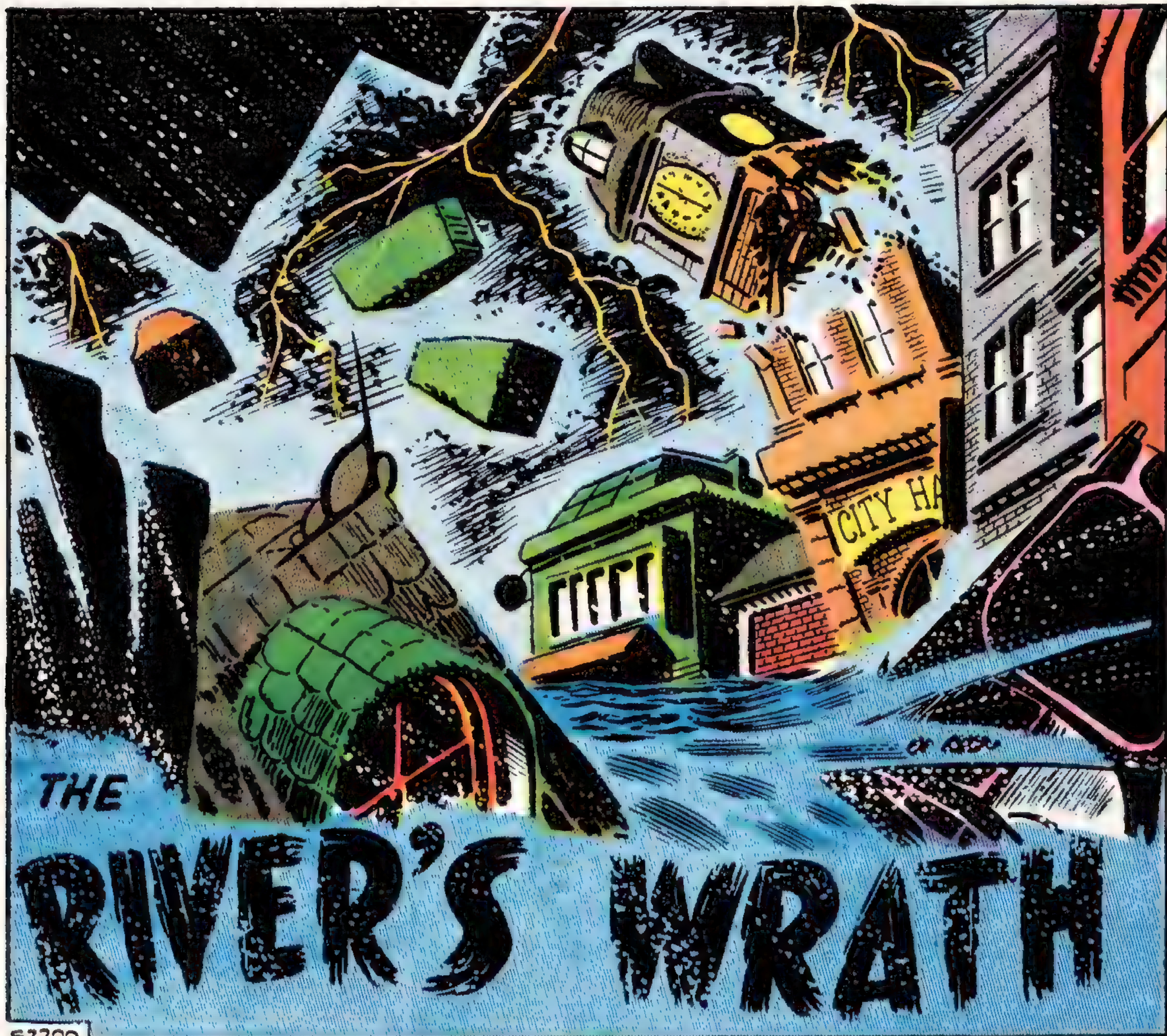
BLUE

RED

YELLOW

BLACK

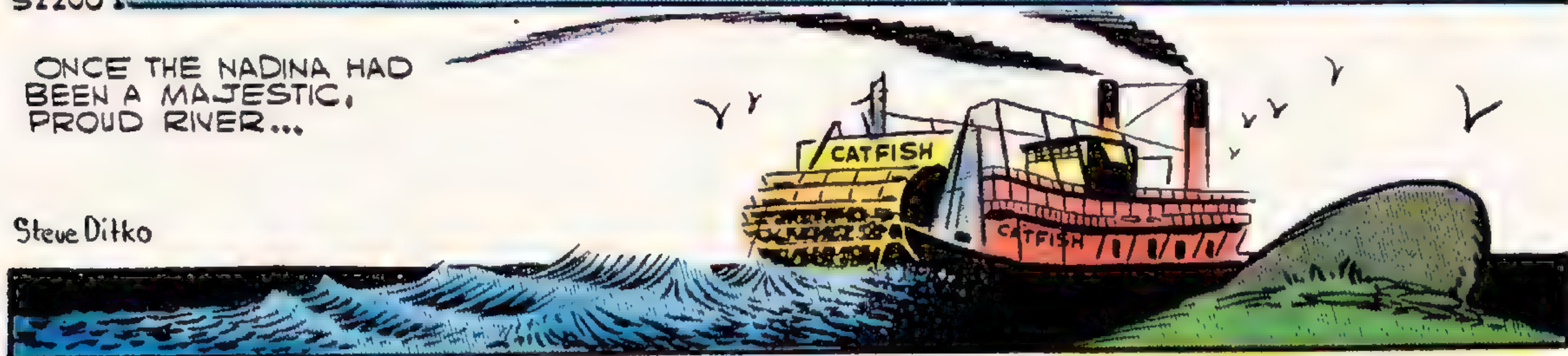
THE NADINA WAS MORE THAN A LONG SLICE OF WINDING WATER! SHE WAS A CONSCIOUS, INTELLIGENT FORCE, ALIVE TO HER SHOALS WITH FEELING! AND WHEN SHE WAS HURT AND ABUSED NOTHING COULD STAND AGAINST...



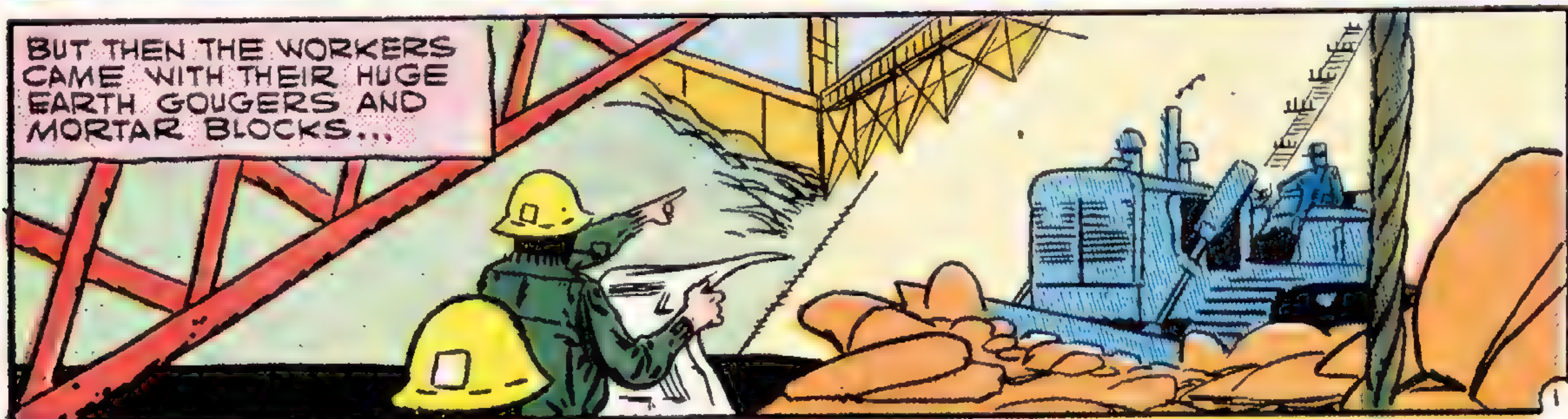
S7200

ONCE THE NADINA HAD BEEN A MAJESTIC, PROUD RIVER...

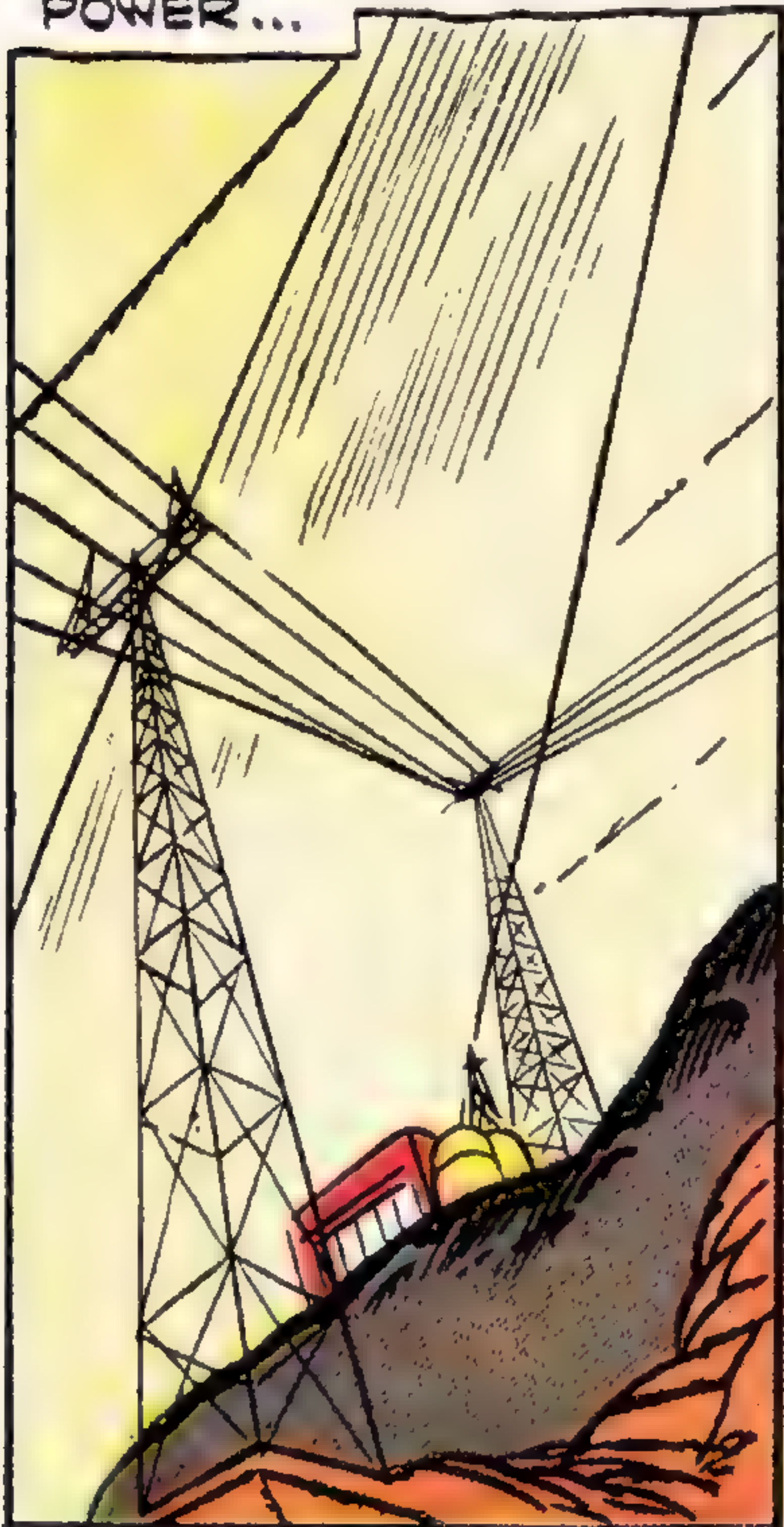
Steve Ditko



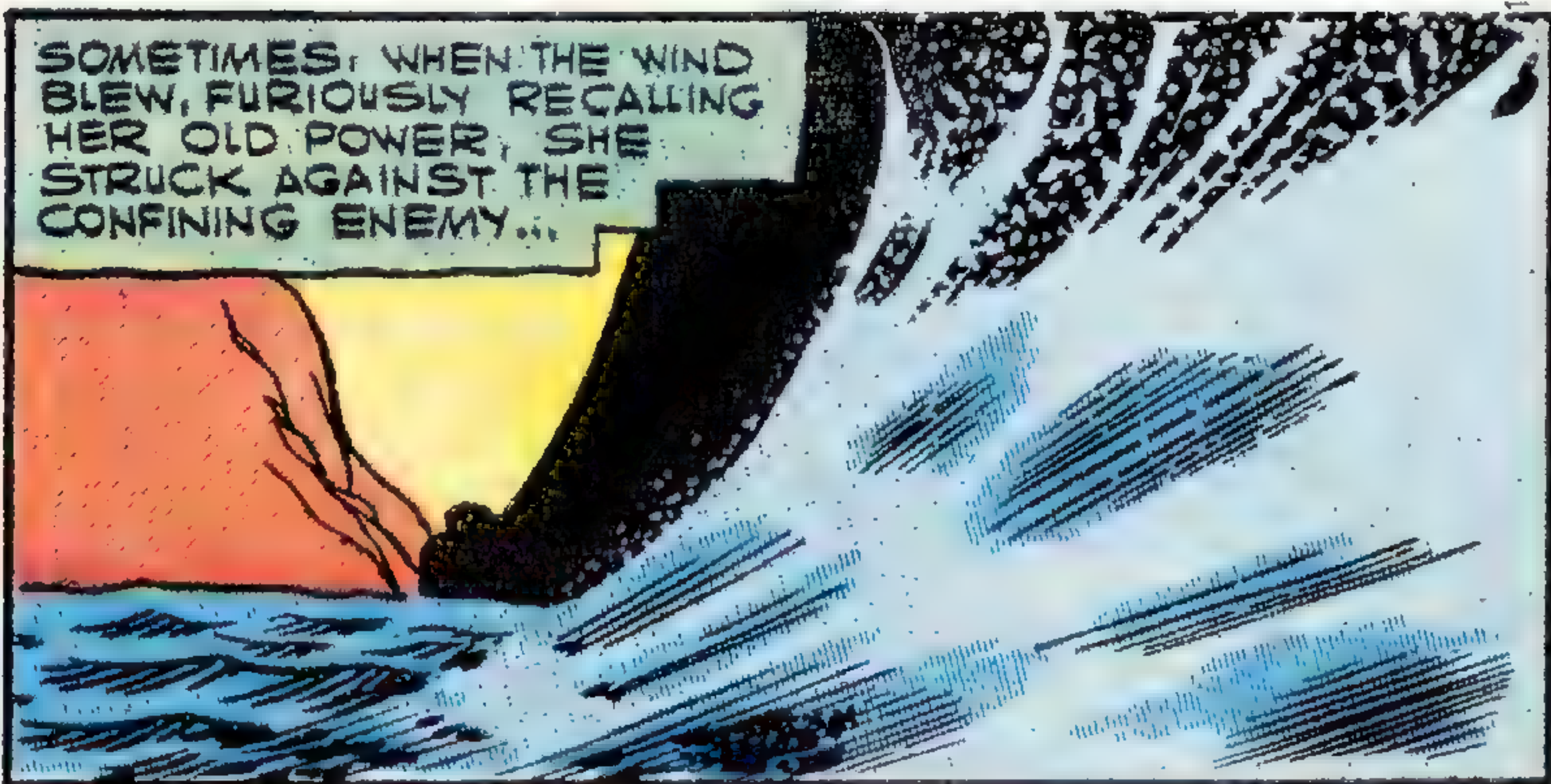
BUT THEN THE WORKERS CAME WITH THEIR HUGE EARTH GOUGERS AND MORTAR BLOCKS...



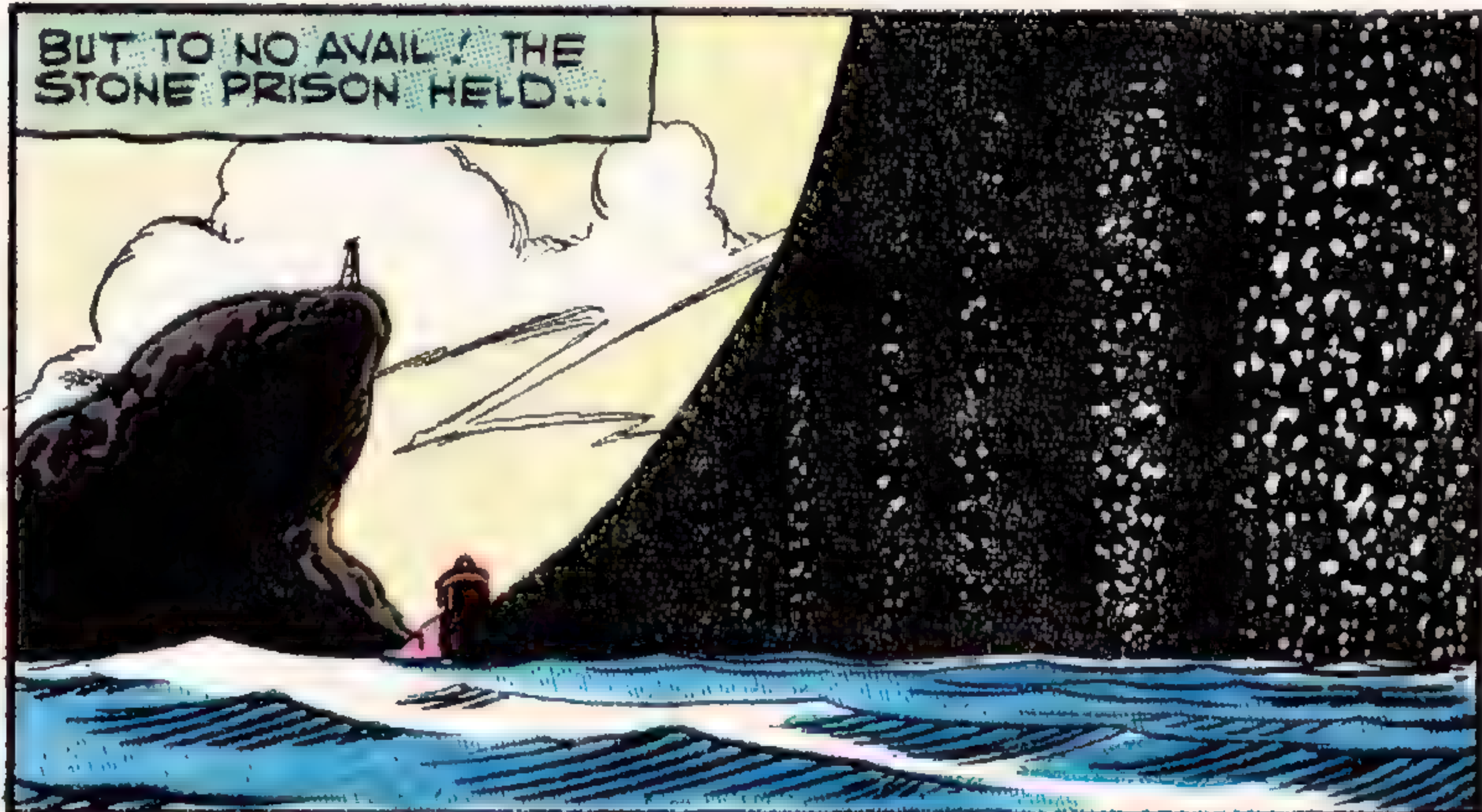
SQUEEZED INTO A CORSET OF CONCRETE, HER LIQUID MUSCLES WERE BROKEN TO BE USED FOR MAN'S POWER...



SOMETIMES, WHEN THE WIND BLEW, FURIOUSLY RECALLING HER OLD POWER, SHE STRUCK AGAINST THE CONFINING ENEMY...



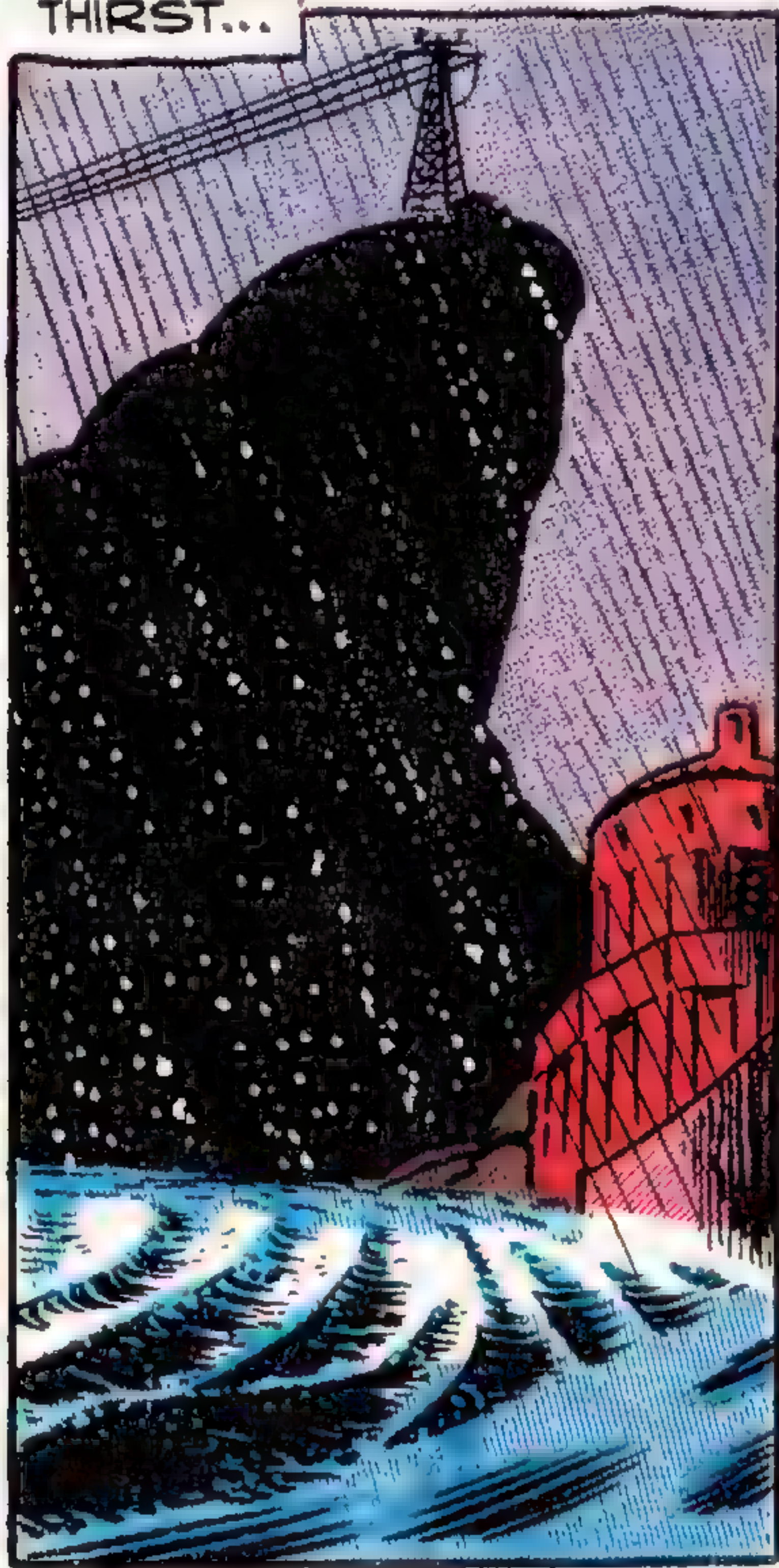
BUT TO NO AVAIL! THE STONE PRISON HELD...



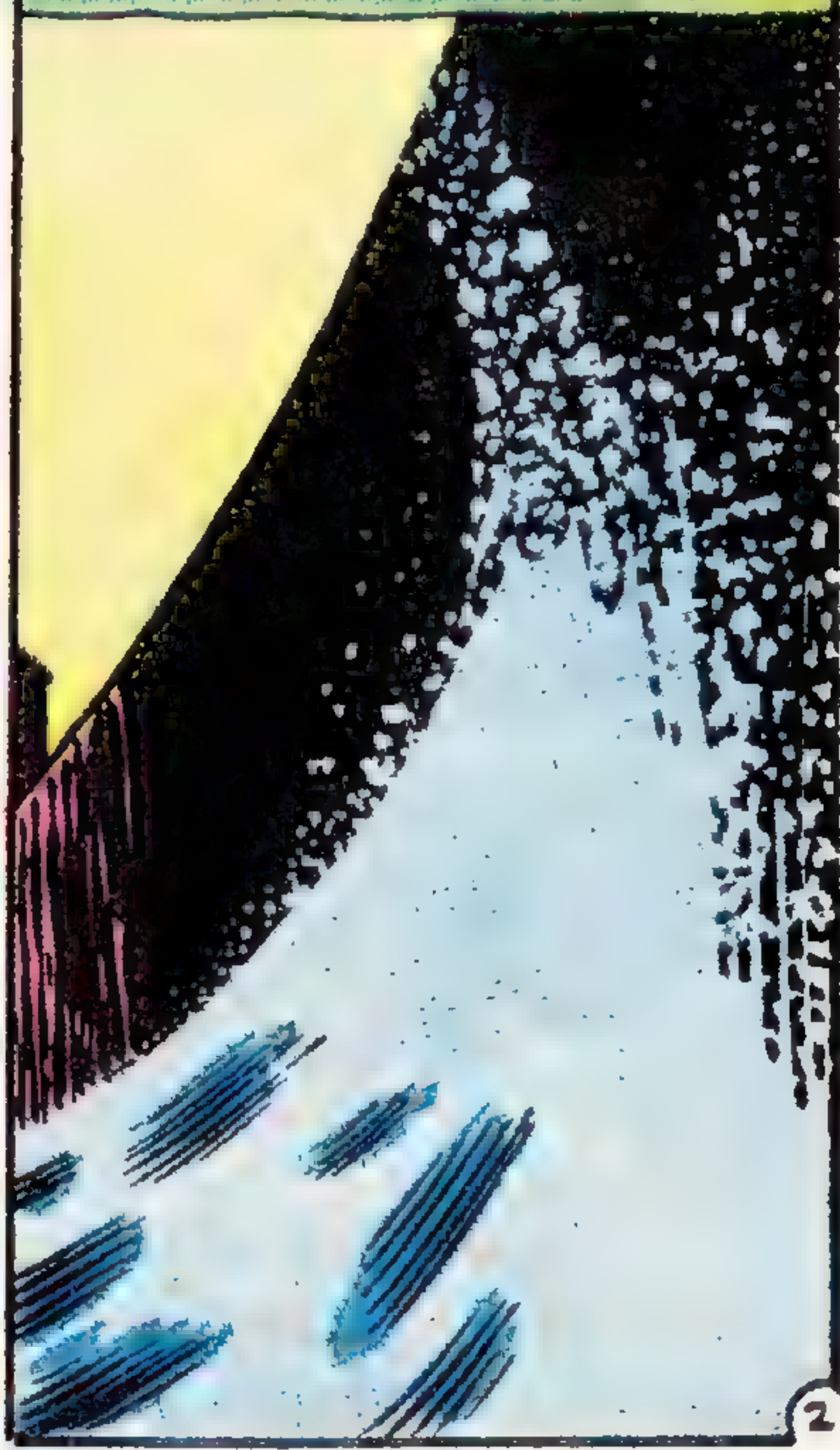
ONE DAY, THE SKY SUDDENLY DARKENED AND THE WIND ROSE HIGHER AND HIGHER...



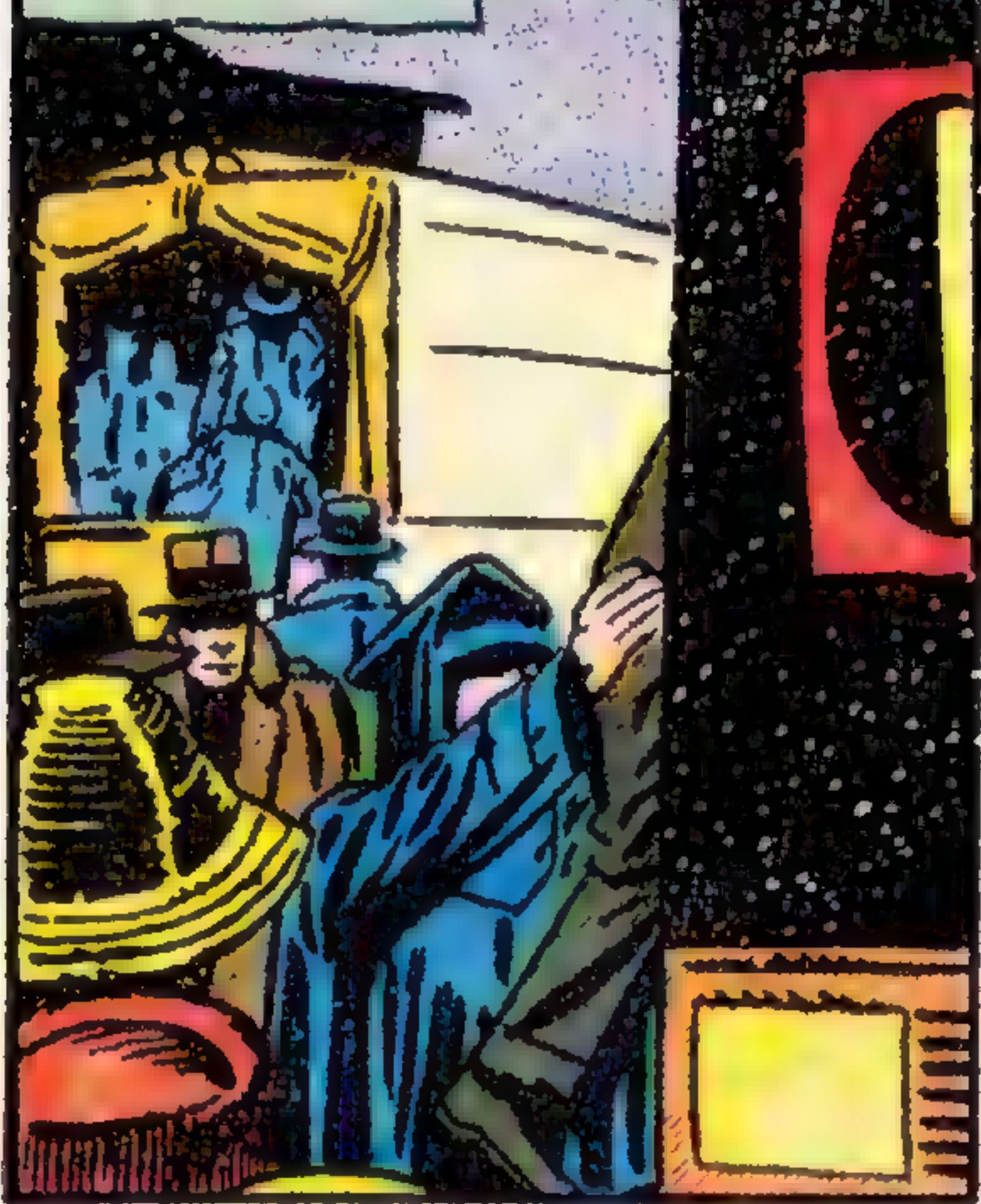
THE RAIN FELL HEAVILY IN BURSTS... OH, HOW NADINA WELCOMED THE RAIN AFTER HER LONG WEAKENING THIRST...



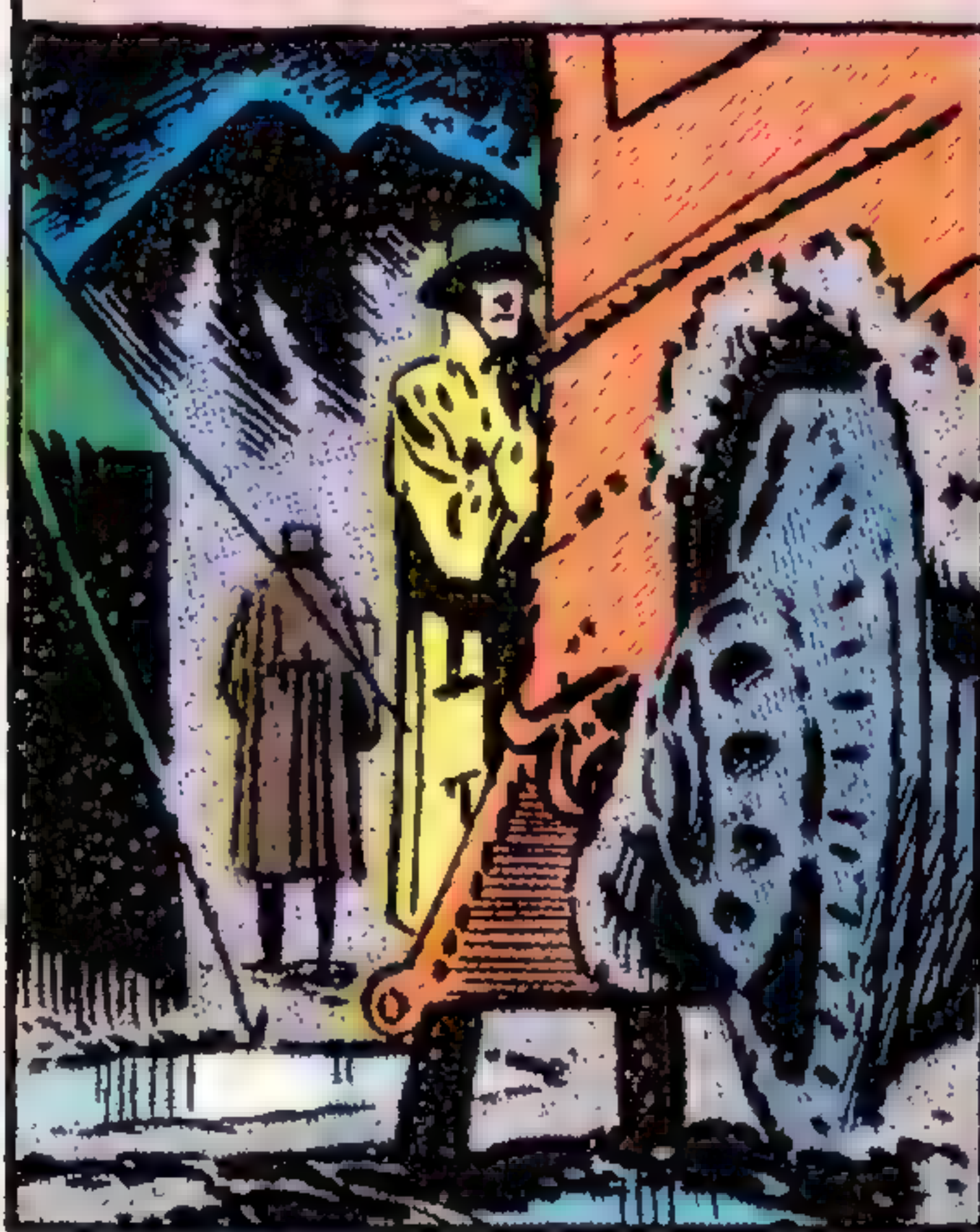
NADINA ROSE IN FULL POWER, FOR NOW SHE HAD HER STRENGTH AGAIN! AND WITH HER REBORN STRENGTH, CAME THE OPPORTUNITY FOR VENGEANCE AGAINST THOSE WHO HAD THOUGHT TO IMPRISON HER...



IN URSELINE, THE TOWN BELOW THE THREATENED DAM, A PANICLESS EVACUATION WENT ON...



...UNTIL EVERY SOUL WAS PACKED OFF TO SAFETY IN THE VALLEY BEHIND URSELA MOUNTAIN...



ALL BUT THREE, WHO CHOSE TO REMAIN, JUST IN CASE SOMEONE HAD BEEN FORGOTTEN! AND SUDDENLY, AS THEY WAITED...

WHAT'S THAT NOISE?

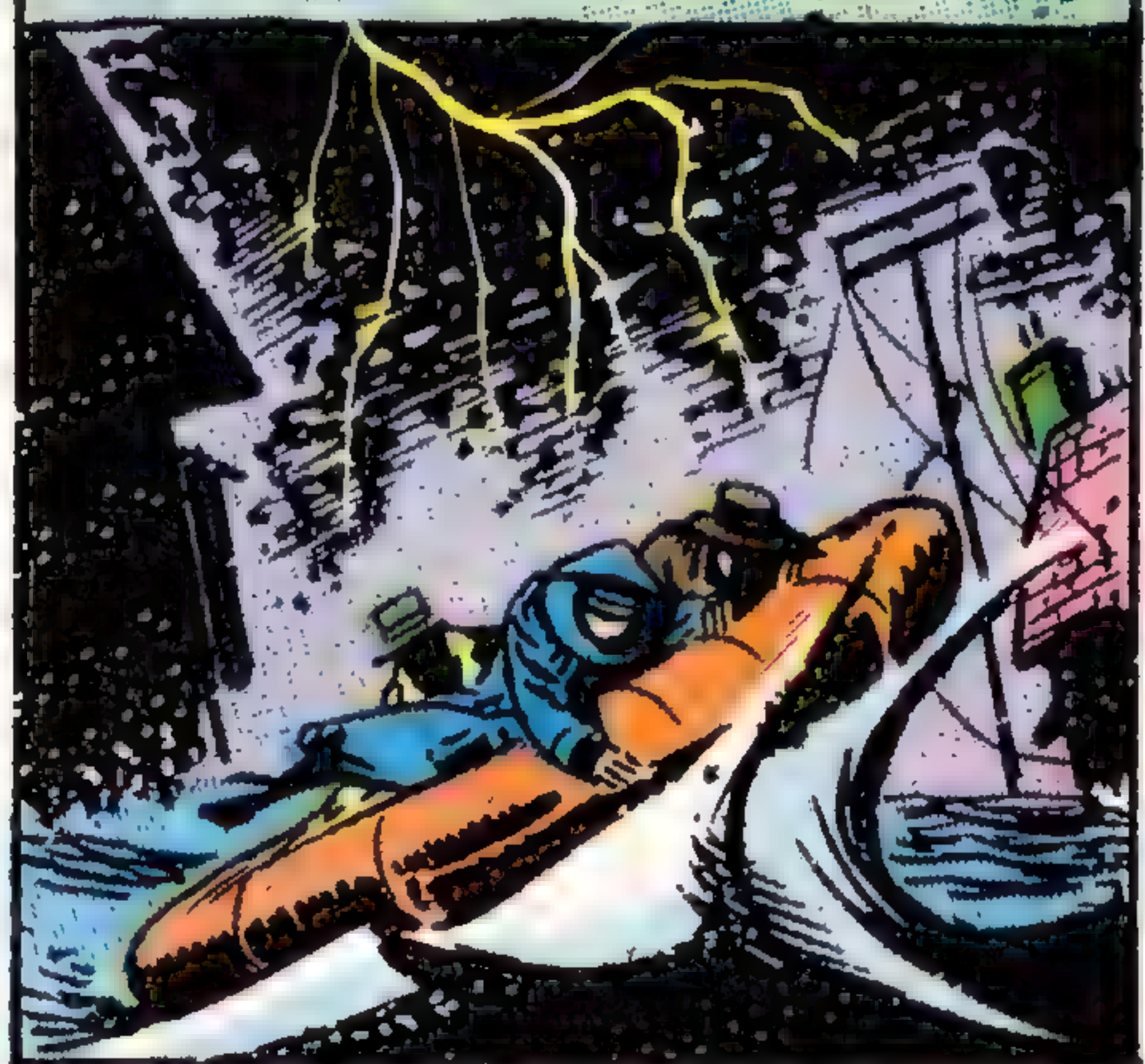
SOUNDS LIKE THE DAM BURST! LET'S GET TO THAT LIFE RAFT ON THE DOUBLE!



NADINA HAD CRACKED THE DAM WIDE OPEN! NOW SHE WAS FREE TO WREAK VENGEANCE...



WRATHFULLY, SHE TORE AT THE FRAIL CRAFT, FOR SHE HAD VOWED TO DESTROY AT LEAST ONE OF THE EVIL BEINGS WHO HAD CONFINED HER! AT LEAST ONE...

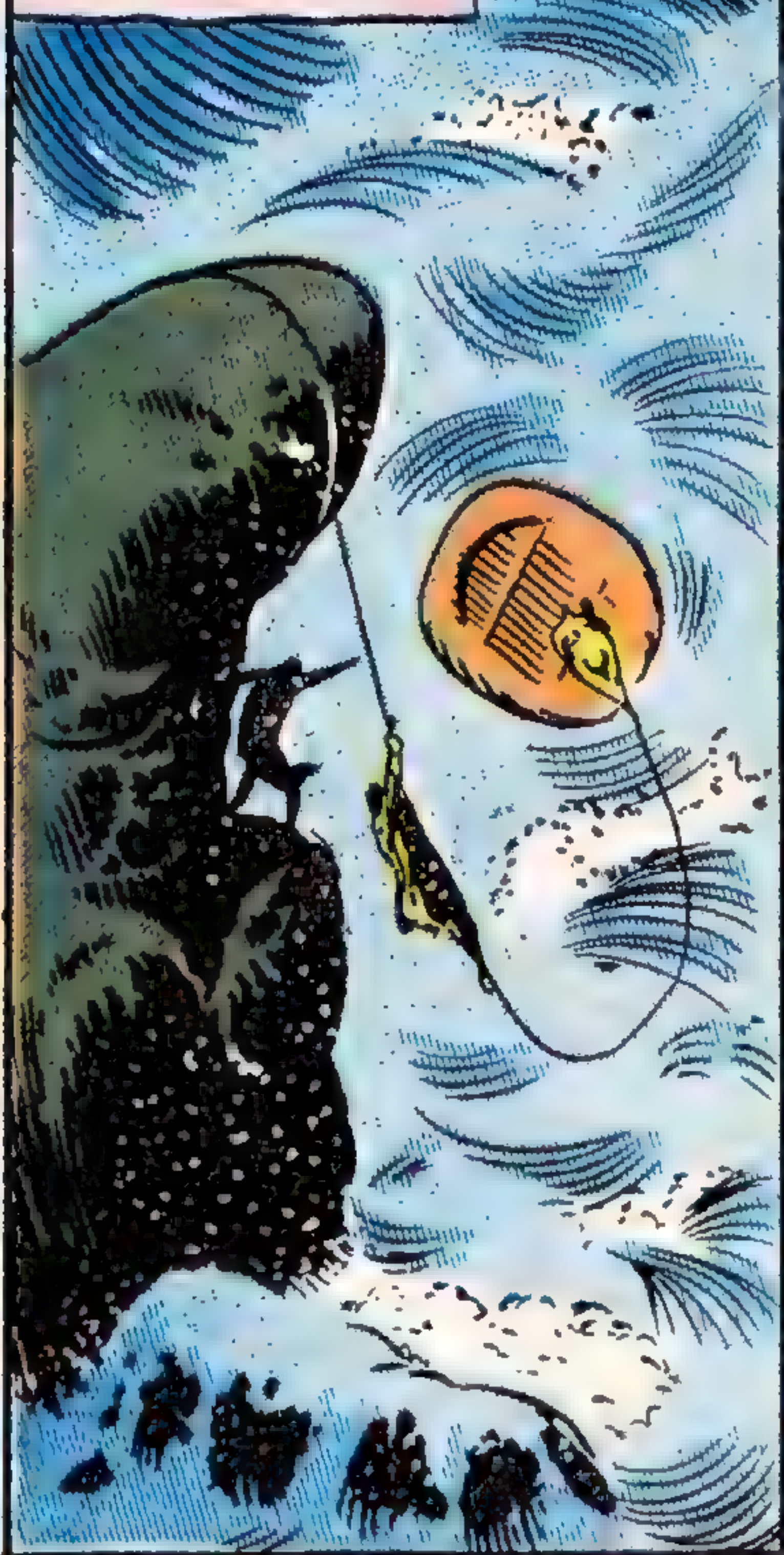


WE'LL BE POUNDED TO DEATH AGAINST THOSE CLIFF WALLS!

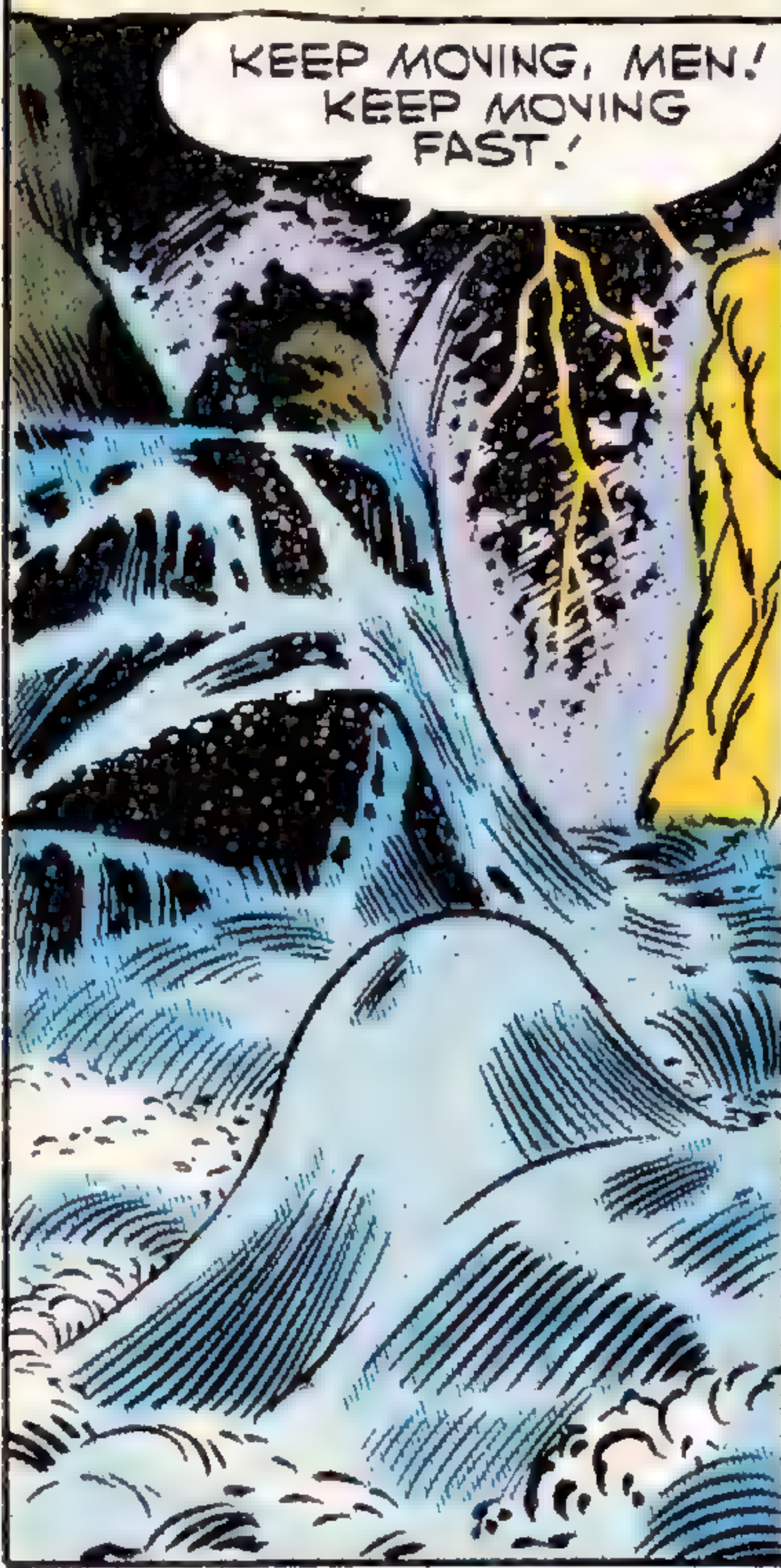
GET THE ROPES READY! I'VE GOT AN IDEA!



WHAT? WERE THEY GOING TO
ESCAPE THE VENGEFUL
RIVER? SHE BOILED
WRATHFULLY...

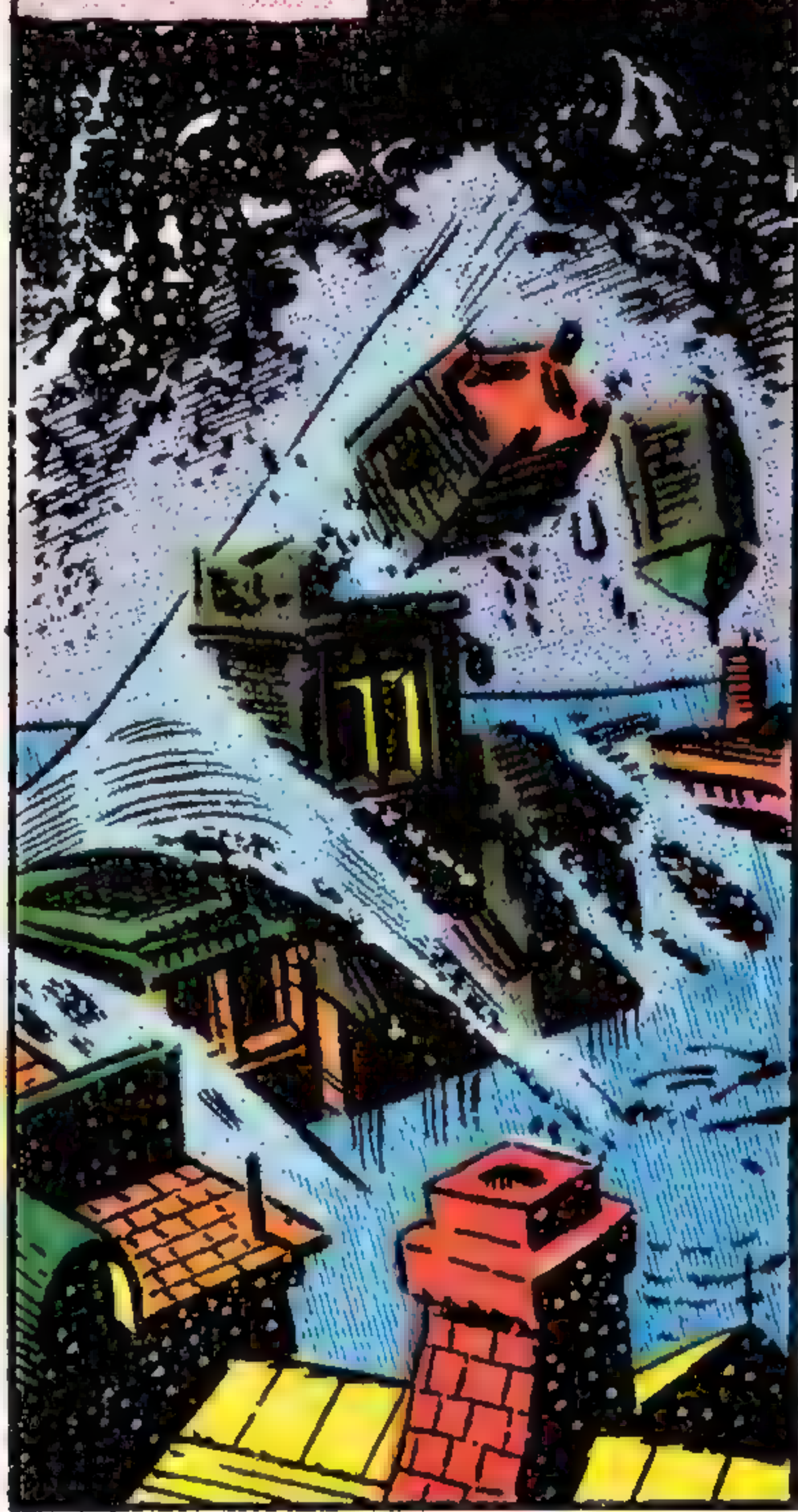


NADINA THREW HER FULL
FURY AGAINST THE WALL TO
TEAR THE HATED SPOILERS
DOWN! HOWEVER...



KEEP MOVING, MEN!
KEEP MOVING
FAST!

GOADED BY THE LOSS OF
HER VICTIMS, SHE NOW
TORE THROUGH THE TOWN IN
A FRENZIED SEARCH FOR
OTHERS...



WHAT WAS THIS? WHAT HAP-
PENED? LESS VICTIMS HAD SHE
FOUND LEFT BEHIND...?

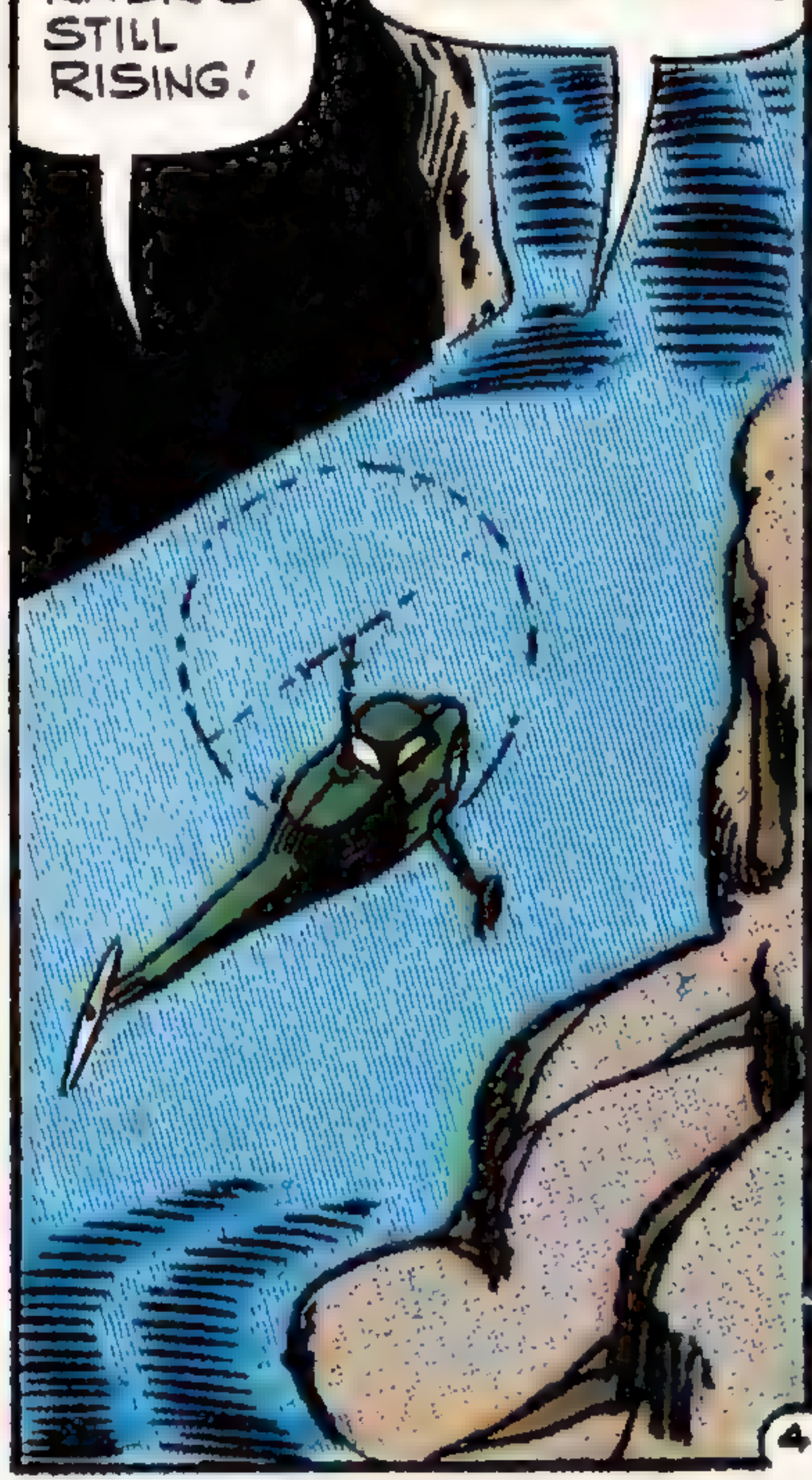


THE RAINS HAD STOPPED,
BUT NADINA, PROUD OF HER
BRAWLING STRENGTH,
PROUD OF HER CONQUEST
OVER MAN, ROSE UN-
CHECKED...



JACK, THIS IS
FANTASTIC!
THE RAINS
STOPPED
HOURS AGO,
BUT THE
RIVER'S
STILL
RISING!

YEAH, AND
GOING UP -
HILL LIKE NO
RIVER IS
SUPPOSED
TO! I CAN'T
MAKE IT OUT!



HIGHER AND HIGHER NADINA ROSE, NEARER AND NEARER TO A FAULT IN THE ROCKY WALLS...



FIVE MORE FEET AND SHE WOULD RIP THROUGH INTO THE VALLEY, DESTROYING THE REFUGEES WITH HER WRATH...



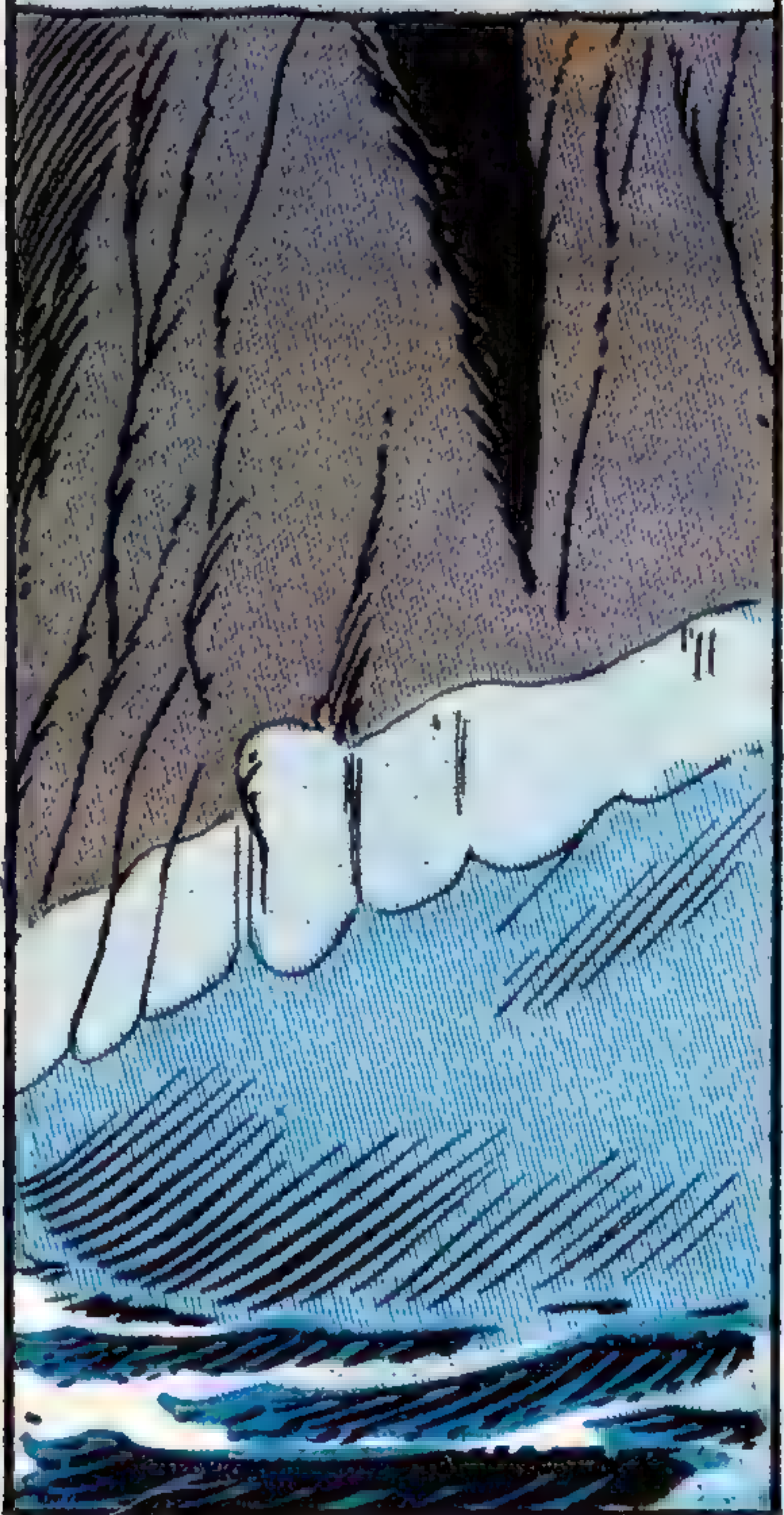
MEANWHILE, UNMINDFUL OF THEIR NEW DANGER, THE EVACUEES HUDDLED, BE-MOANING THEIR LOSSES...

I JUST BOUGHT A NEW CAR AND THIS HAD TO HAPPEN!

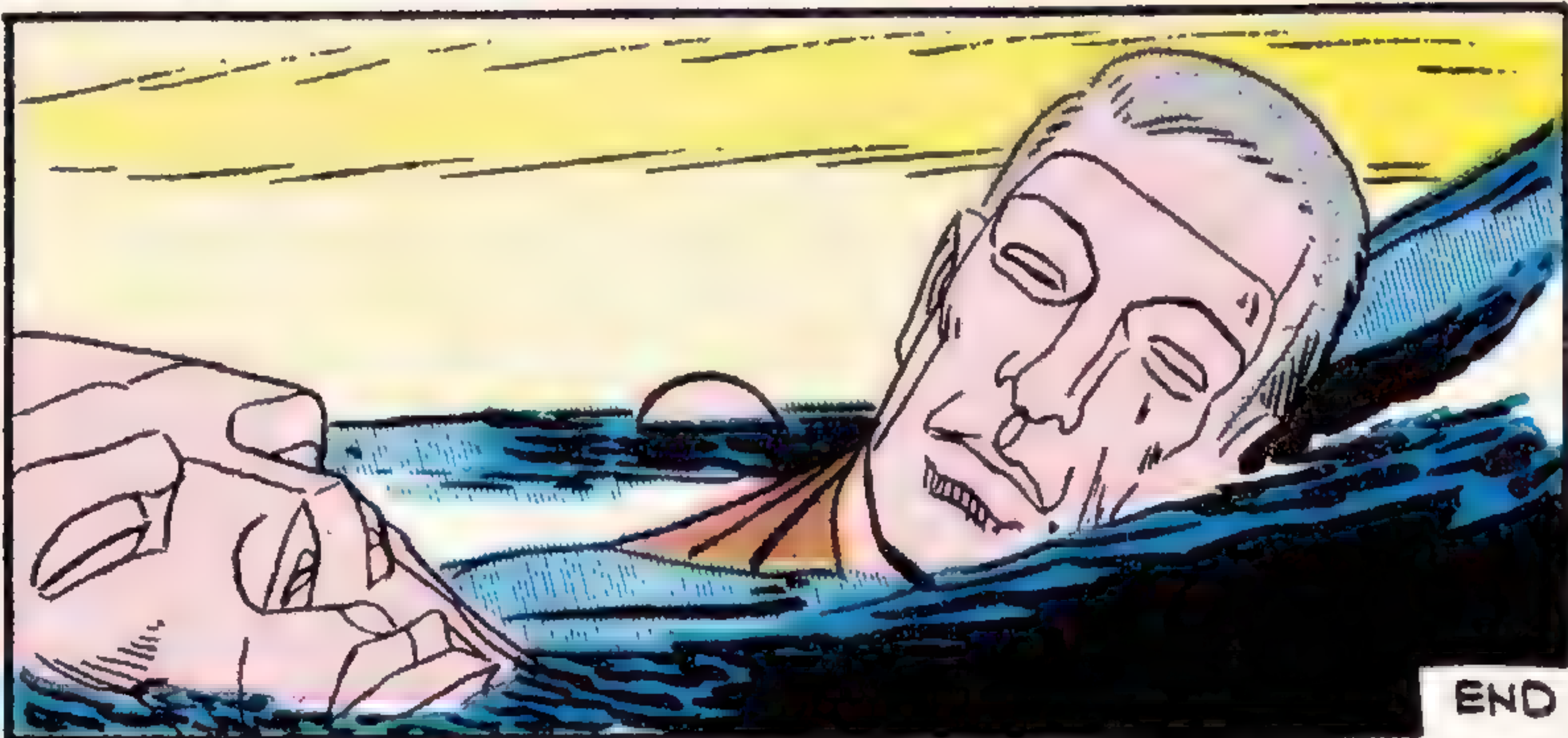
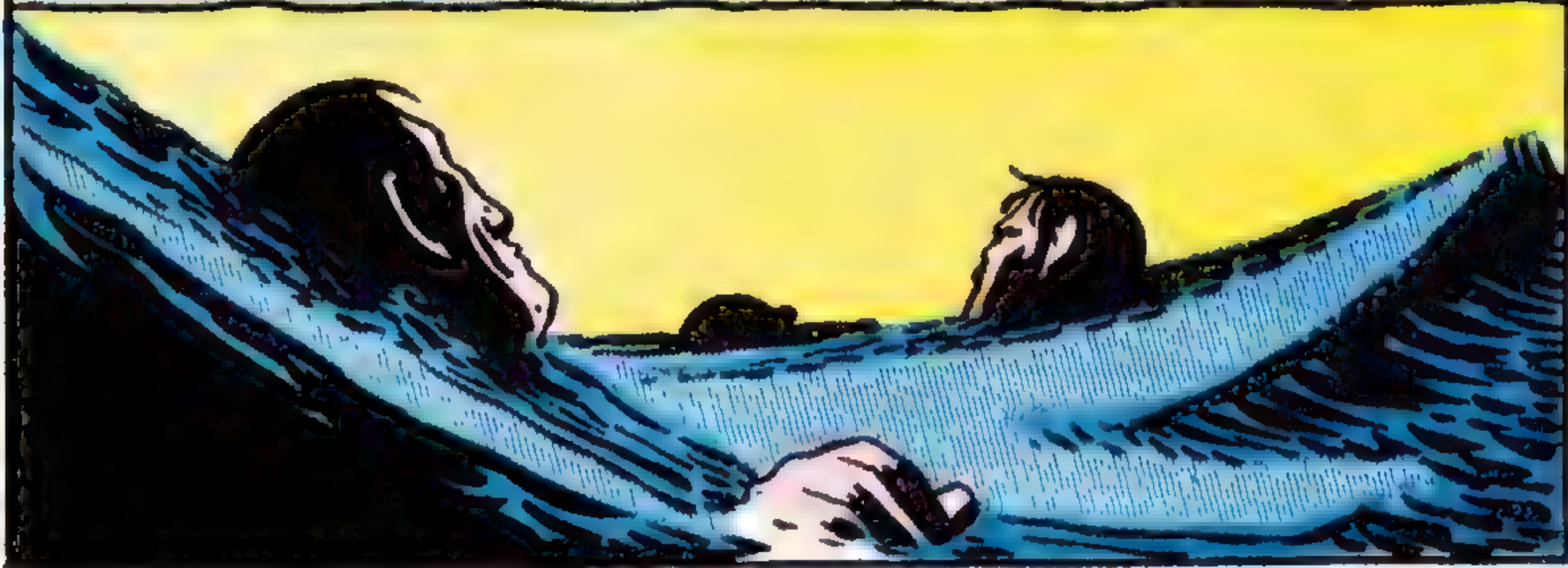
I OPENED MY NEW WAX MUSEUM ON MAIN STREET YESTERDAY! ALL NEW WAX FIGURES! YOU COULDN'T TELL THEM FROM HUMANS AT TEN FEET! EVERYTHING DESTROYED IN THIS TERRIBLE FLOOD!



JUST A FEW MORE INCHES AND THE FAULT WOULD BE REACHED! BUT NADINA SUDDENLY STOPPED AND BEGAN TO RECEDE...

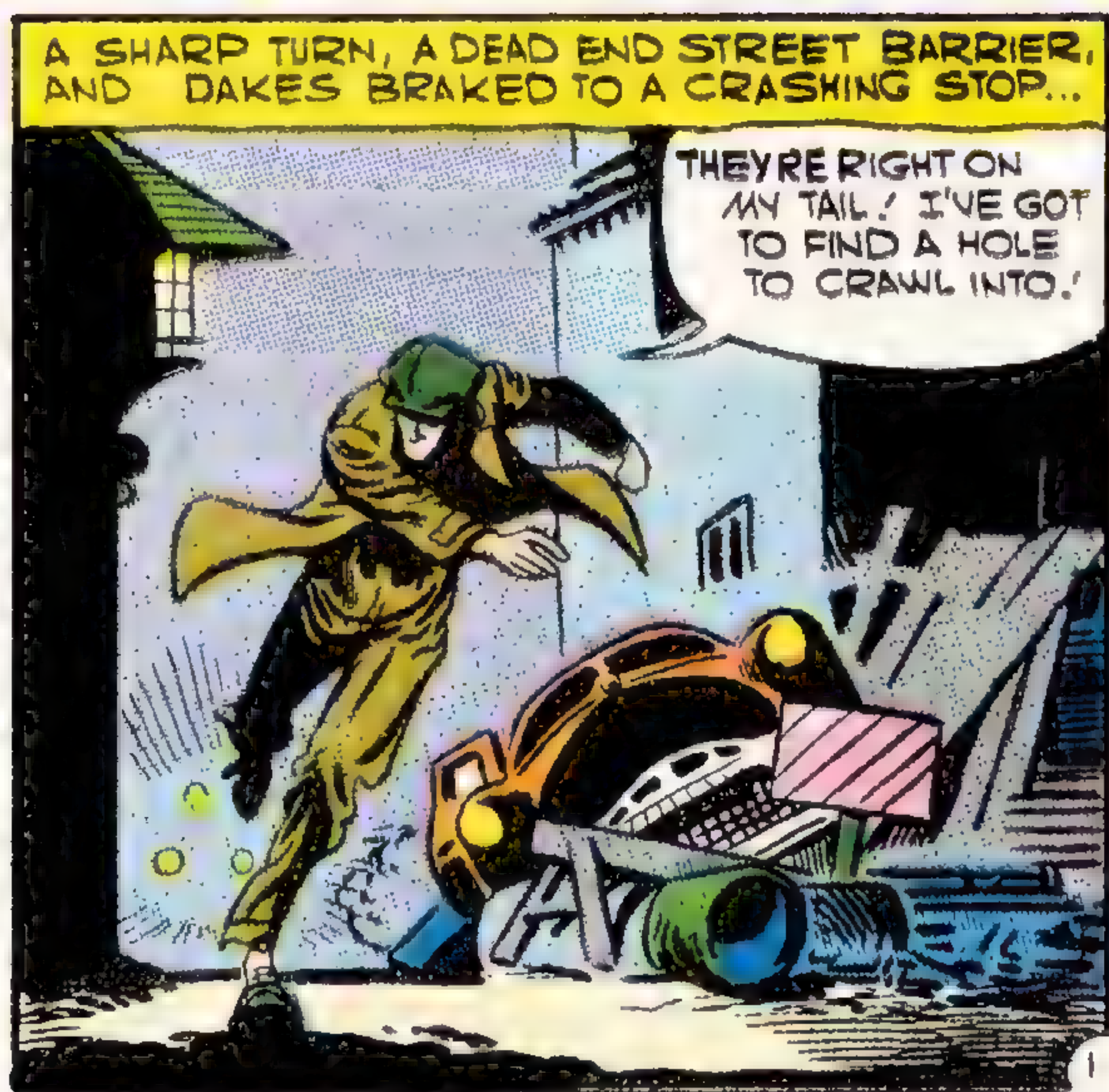
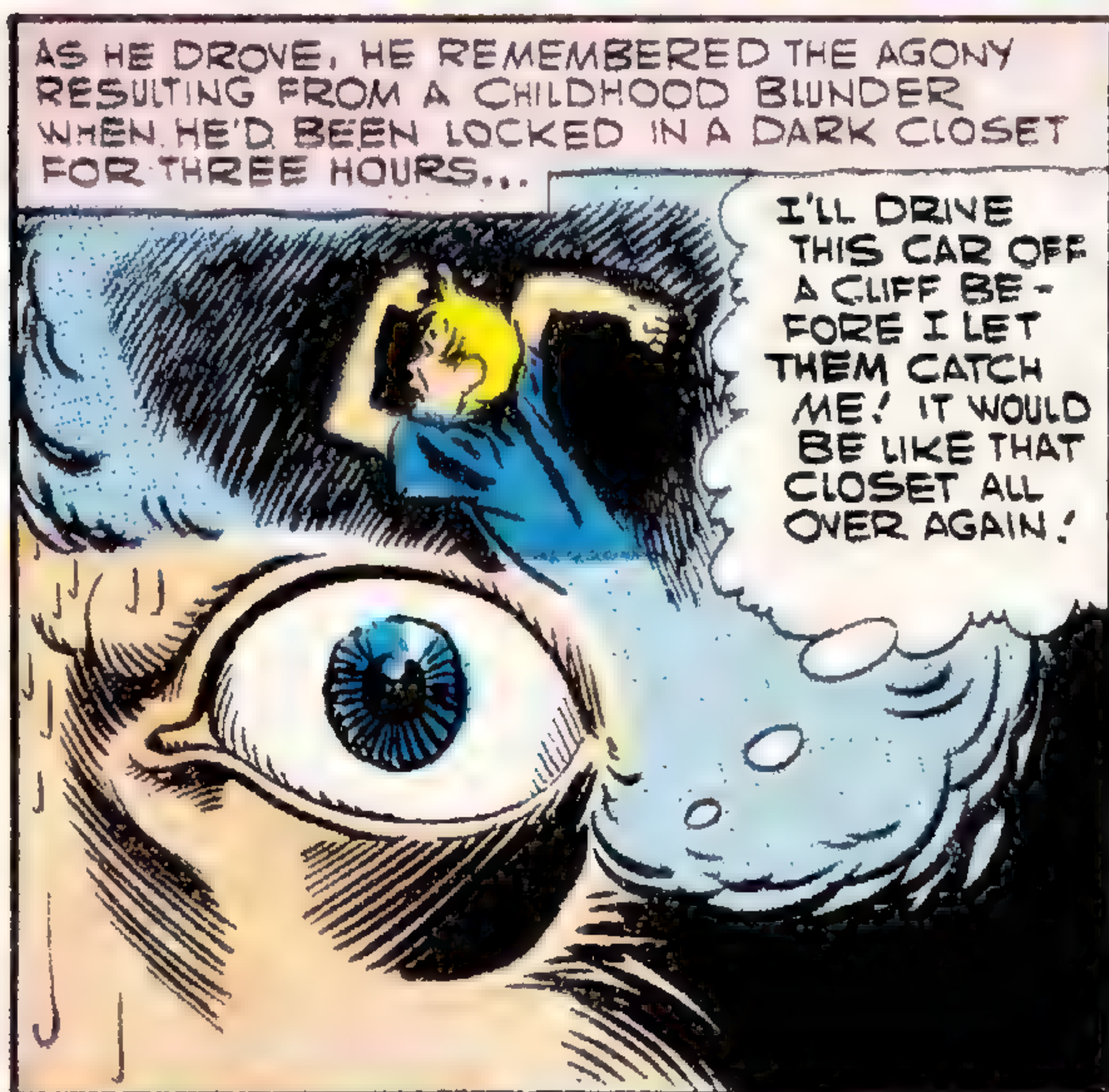


FOR HADN'T SHE FLEXED HER MUSCLES ENOUGH? HADN'T SHE GAINED MUCH MORE THAN SHE HAD BARGAINED FOR? A DOZEN... NOT JUST ONE VICTIM, WERE IMMUTABLE EVIDENCE OF HER REVENGE...



END

OVER AND OVER NADINE GLOATED AND ROLLED THE LIFE-LIKE FIGURES OF DEAD TABLOID HEROES AND THE DEPARTED GREAT! HOW WAS SHE TO KNOW THEY WERE ONLY MADE OF WAX?



THE DOORS WERE ALL SHUT! THE HOUSE APPEARED ABANDONED! AND SO...

THIS SHOULD BE A DECENT PLACE TO HIDE! IF THEY MISS THE CAR, THEY'LL NEVER LOOK HERE!



WARILY, DAKES SEARCHED THE HOUSE! AND IN THE BASEMENT...

KEEP QUIET, DOC, AND YOU WON'T GET HURT! WHAT'S ALL THIS FANCY GLASS ABOUT?

I... I'M A SCIENTIST! THIS IS MY LABORATORY!



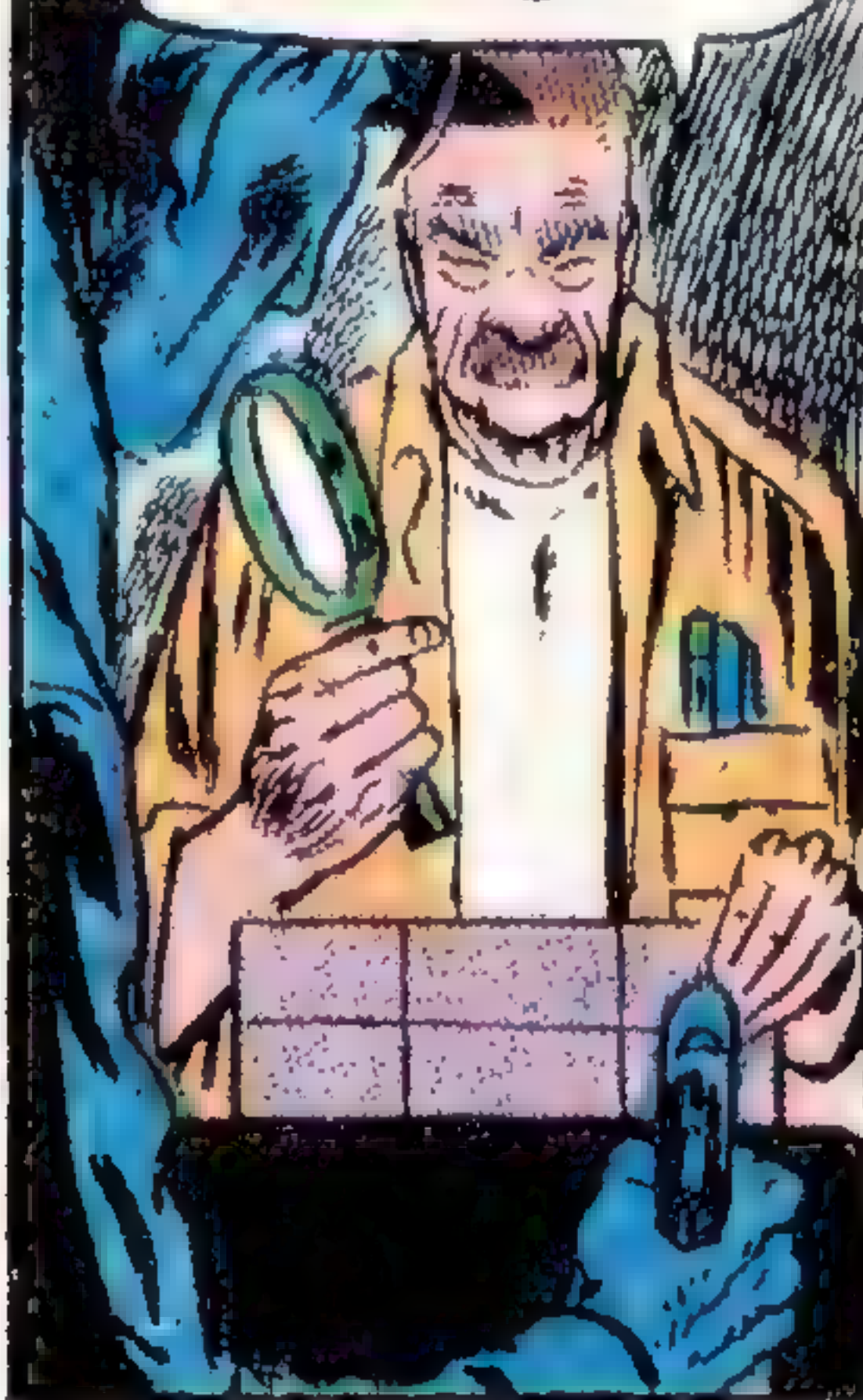
PRODDED BY THE MENACING GUN, THE SCIENTIST REVEALED THE NATURE OF HIS PROJECT...

I'M WORKING ON AN EXPERIMENT TO SHRINK LIVING THINGS! YOU WOULDN'T BE INTERESTED!

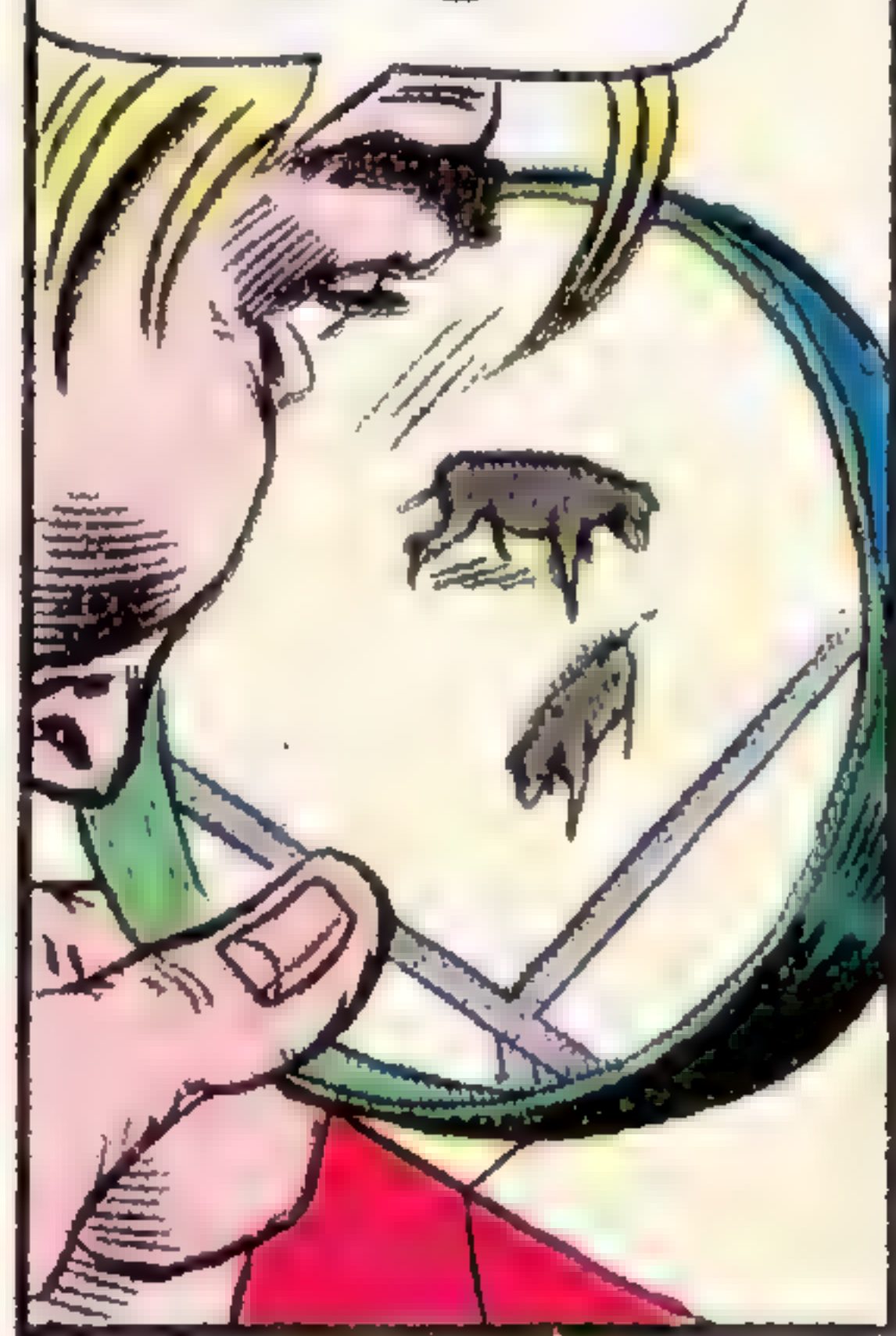
THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG, DOC! I PULLED A JOB AND THE COPPERS ARE BREATHING DOWN MY NECK! THE SMALLER I CAN GET RIGHT NOW, THE BETTER! SHOW ME WHAT YOU'VE DONE!



LOOK THROUGH THIS MAGNIFYING GLASS! I'VE TRIED THE SERUM ON SOME ANIMALS!



HEY, THEY'RE CUTE! AND THEY LOOK LIKE SPECKS WITHOUT THIS GLASS! NOBODY WOULD EVER NOTICE THEM



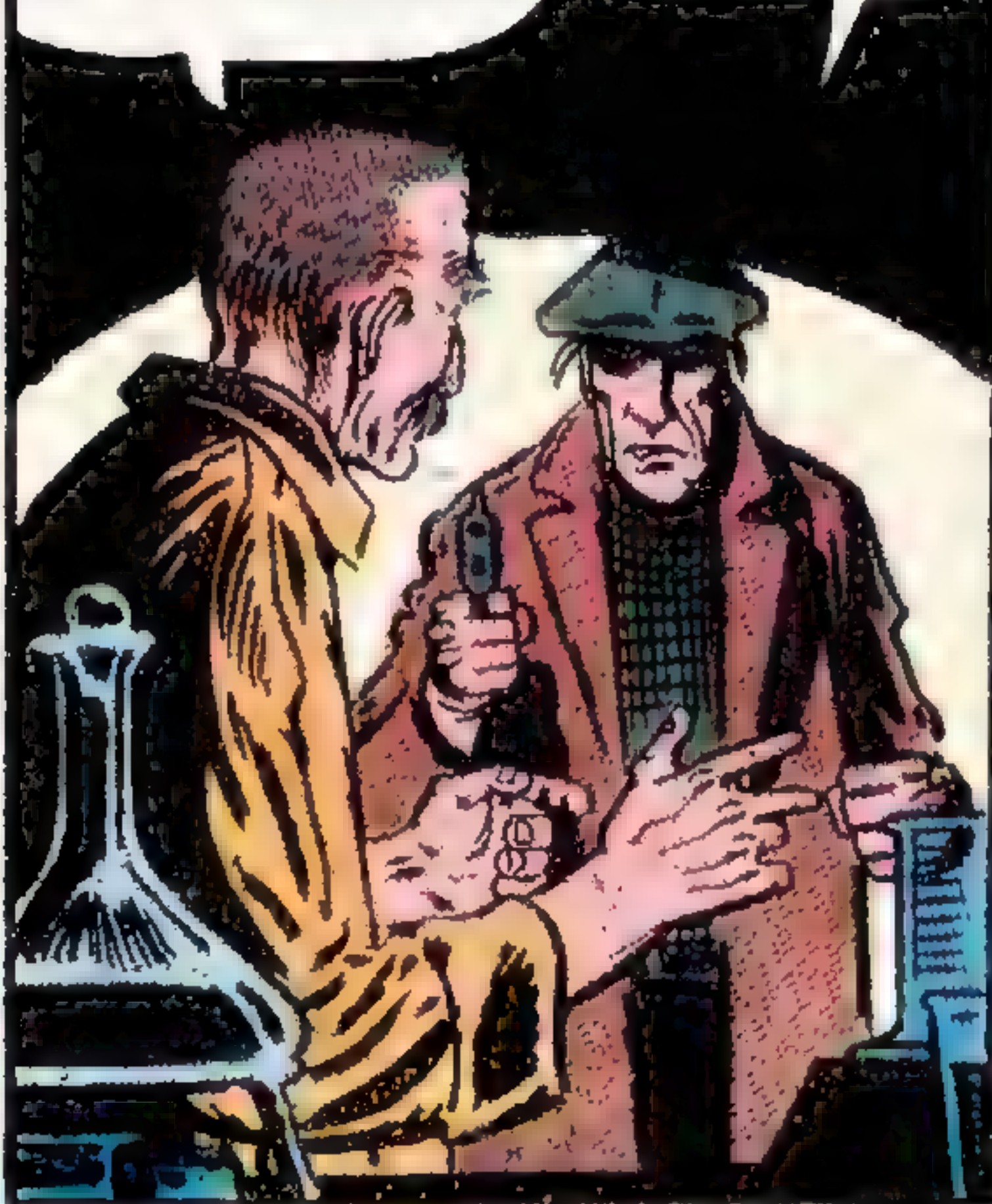
FOR A MOMENT DAKES TOYED WITH THE IDEA! THEN, WHEN HE REALIZED ALL OTHER ESCAPE WAS CUT OFF...

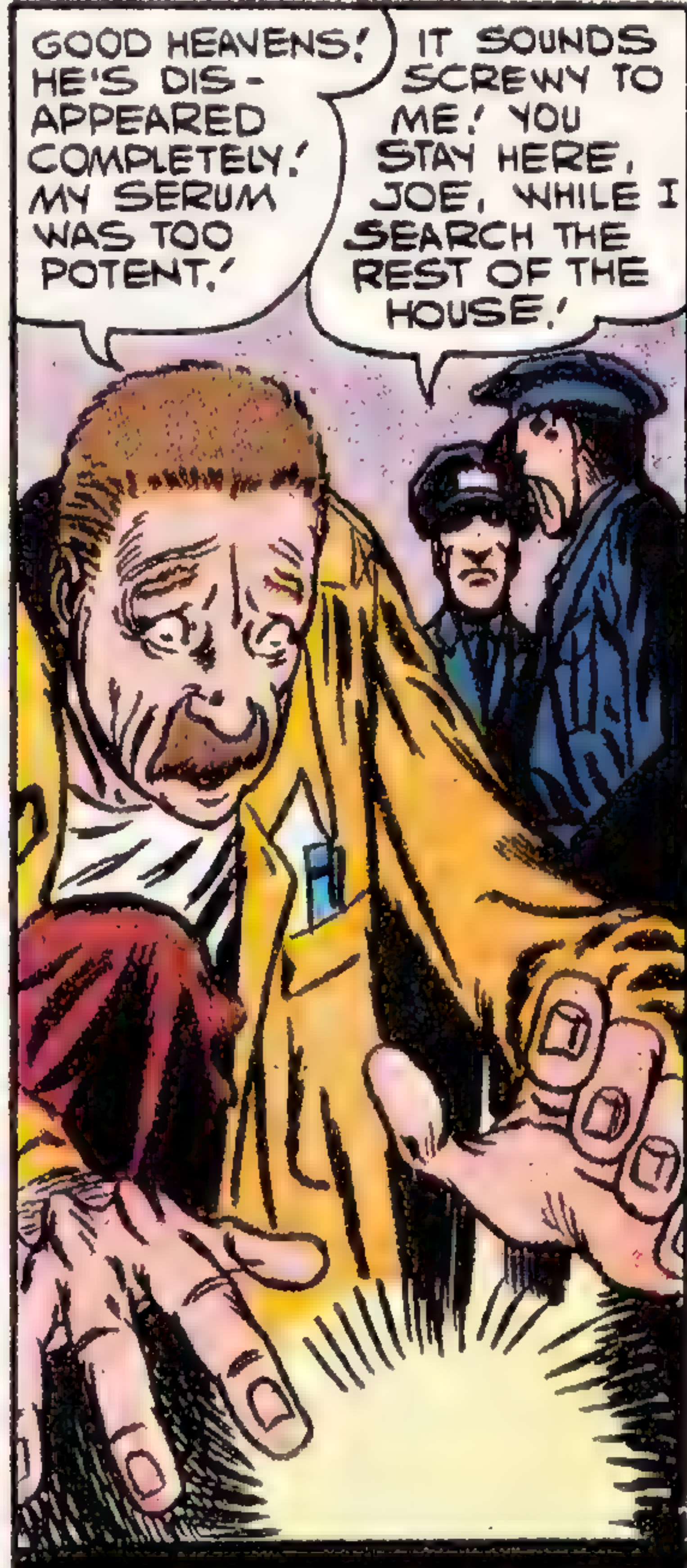
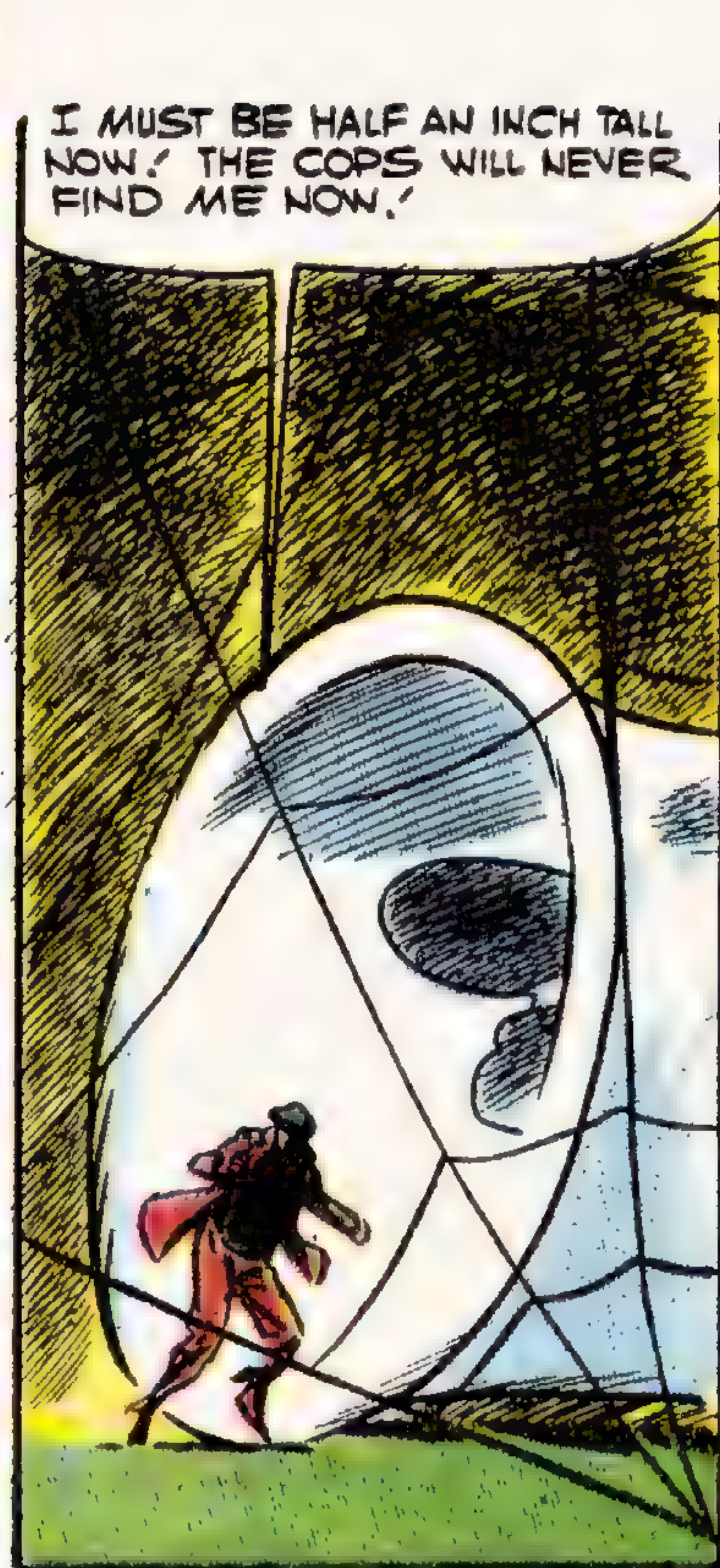
OPEN UP! IT'S THE POLICE!



GIVE ME THE STUFF QUICK! I DON'T HAVE ANY CHOICE!

BUT I'VE NEVER TRIED IT ON HUMANS!





RUNNING IN TERROR, DAKES REACHED A WALL AND UN-CHECKED, WENT THROUGH ITS MOLECULAR FIBRES...

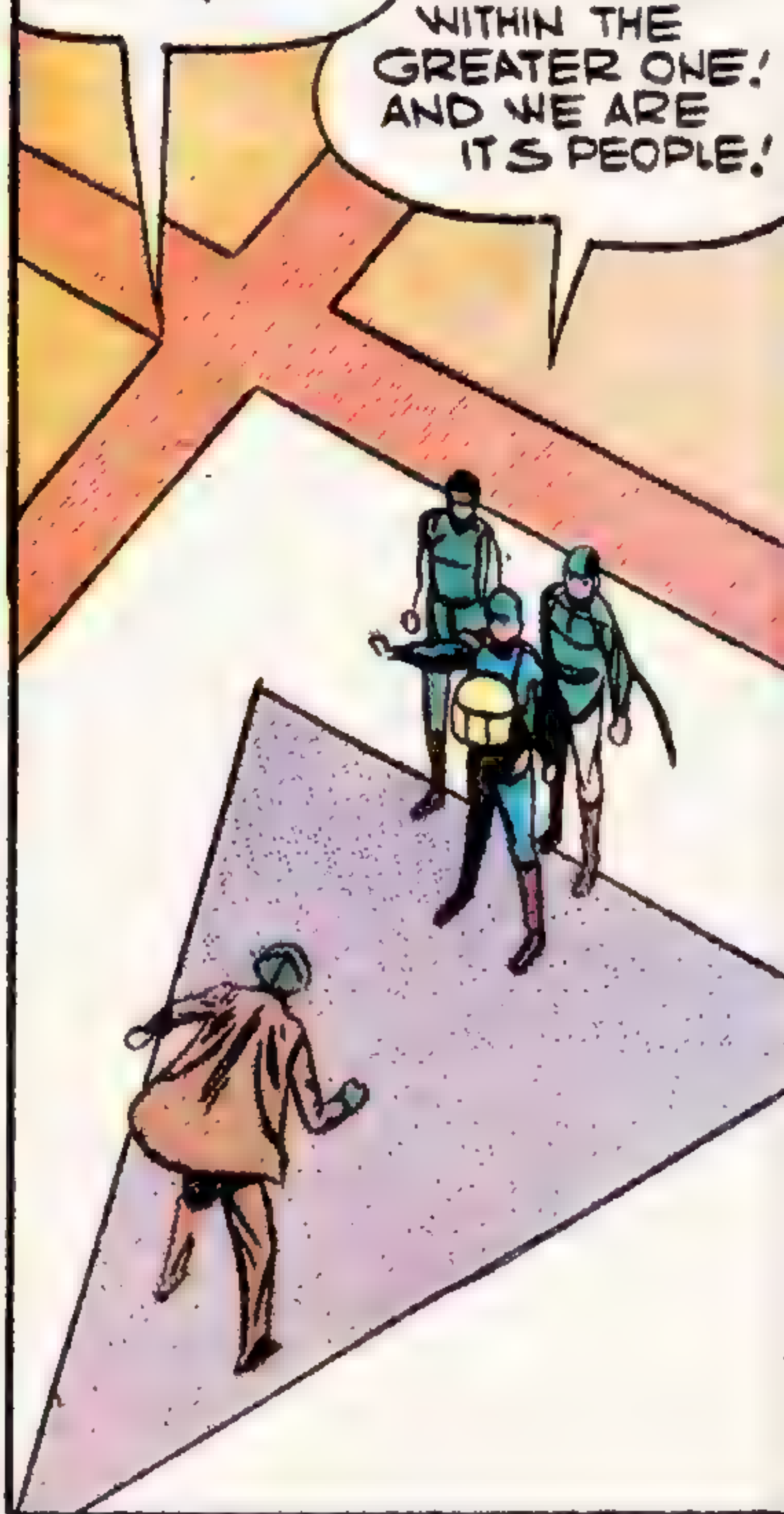
WHERE AM I? LOOKS LIKE A STREET... AND HOUSES ALL AROUND. MAYBE I'VE DISCOVERED A NEW WORLD?



SUDDENLY...

WH-WHO ARE YOU? WHERE AM I?

YOU ARE IN THE LAND OF MICROCOS-MOPOLIS, THE TINY WORLD WITHIN THE GREATER ONE! AND WE ARE ITS PEOPLE!



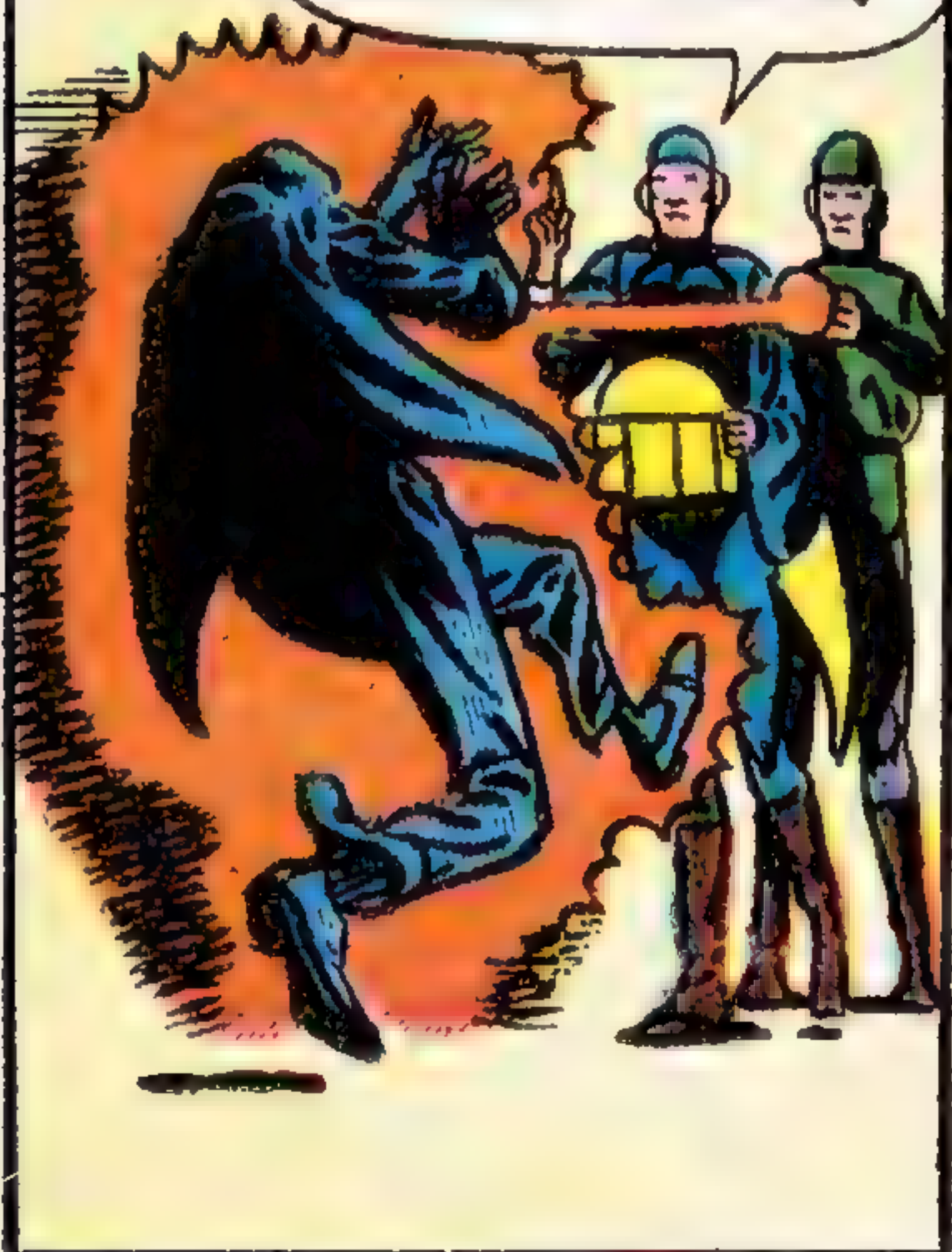
YOU ARE AN ALIEN HERE, DAKES, AND AS SUCH YOU MUST ABIDE BY OUR LAWS!

ME, AN ALIEN? WHY, YOU SHRIMP, I'LL PUNCH YOU IN THE NOSE!



AS DAKES RAISED A THREATENING FIST...

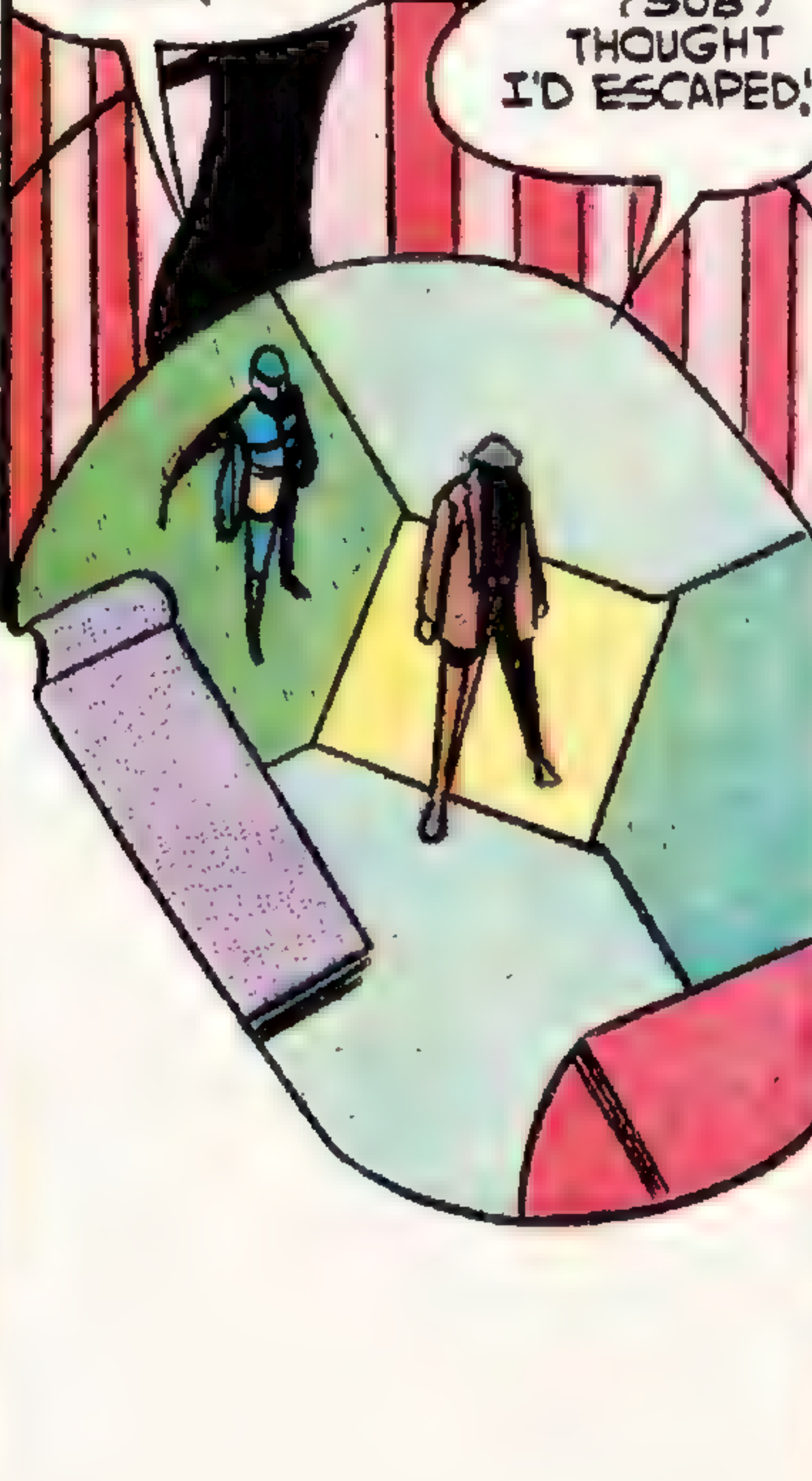
OOWWW! HEY, ENOUGH! TURN THOSE THINGS OFF! I'LL LISTEN! OUR MENTAL SCANNERS TELL US YOU HAVE A CRIMINAL MENTALITY, DAKES! WE CAN READ YOUR EVERY THOUGHT! THEREFORE, WE MUST ISOLATE YOU FROM THE COMMUNITY AS WE WOULD A DISEASE! COME!



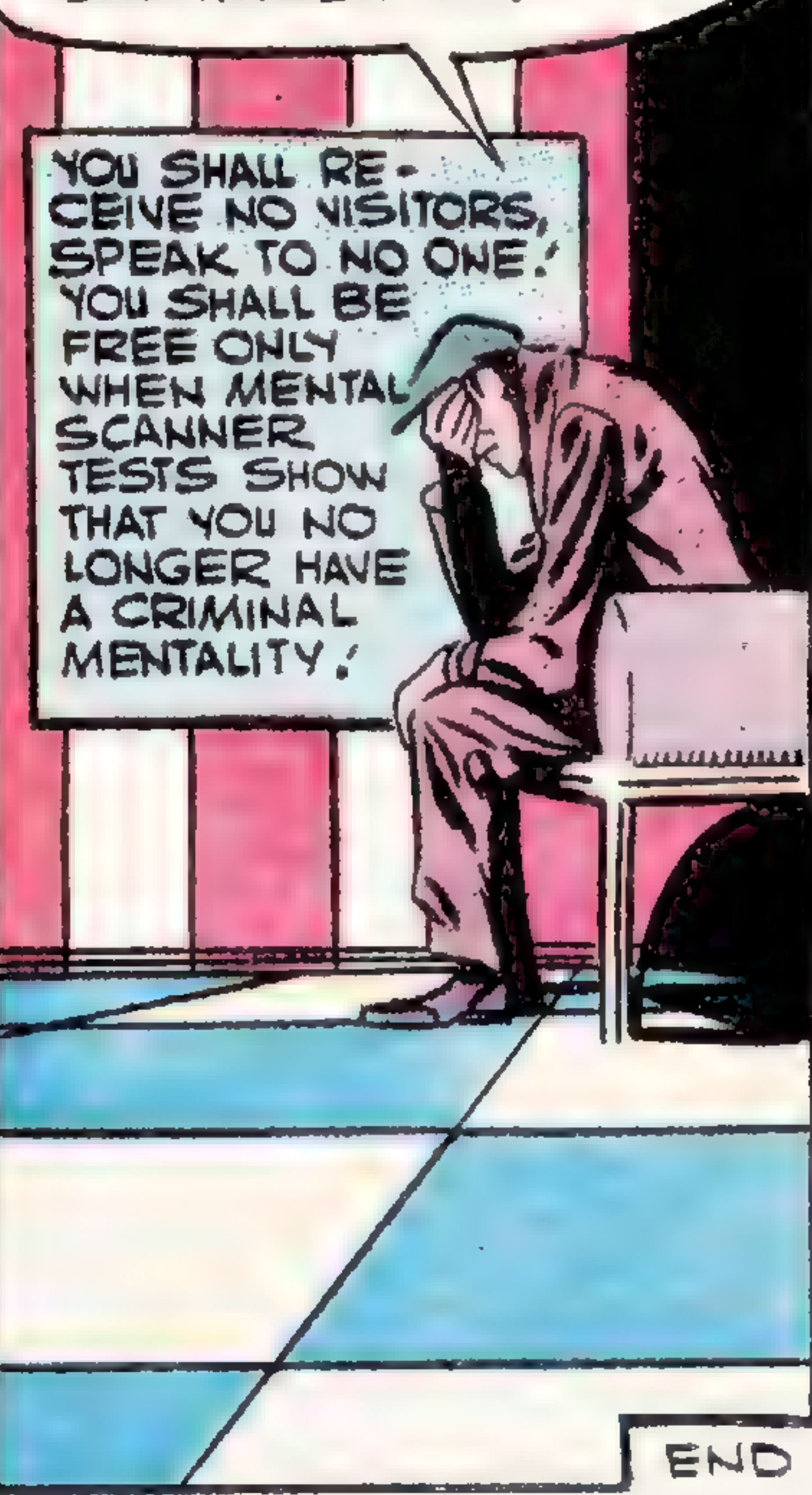
A SHORT TIME LATER...

THIS SHALL BE YOUR HOME! THE RULES YOU MUST LIVE BY ARE ON THE WALL! STUDY THEM! WELL!

M-MY HOME? AND I (SOB) THOUGHT I'D ESCAPED!



THIS IS (SOB) WORSE THAN ANY JAIL I COULD EVER HAVE BEEN SENT TO! IT'S WORSE EVEN ... THAN THAT CLOSET WHEN I WAS A KID! I WISH I **COULD** GET BACK TO MY OWN WORLD, I'D GIVE MYSELF UP!



YOU SHALL RECEIVE NO VISITORS, SPEAK TO NO ONE! YOU SHALL BE FREE ONLY WHEN MENTAL SCANNER TESTS SHOW THAT YOU NO LONGER HAVE A CRIMINAL MENTALITY!

END

NOBODY HERE IN CRESTVILLE WILL EVER FORGET THAT NIGHT. IT WAS THE EERIEST STORM EVER GLIMPSED BY HUMAN EYES ON LAND OR SEA. IT WAS...

THE NIGHT OF THE RED SNOW

I WAS MAYOR OF CRESTVILLE. IT WAS UP TO ME TO DO SOMETHING...

ALL WOMEN AND CHILDREN STAY INSIDE! I WANT EVERY ABLE-BODIED MAN OVER AT MY PLACE ON THE DOUBLE!



S2207

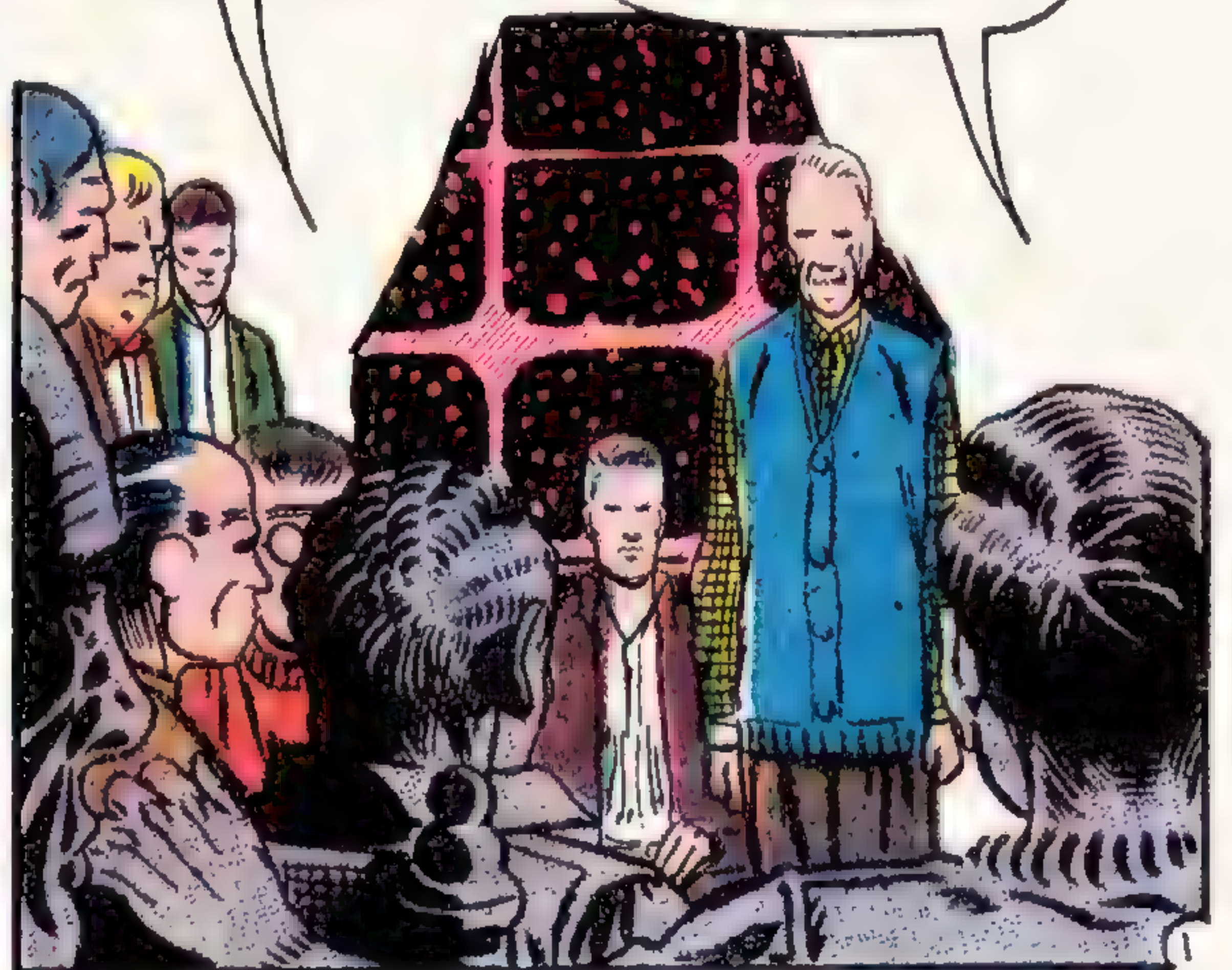
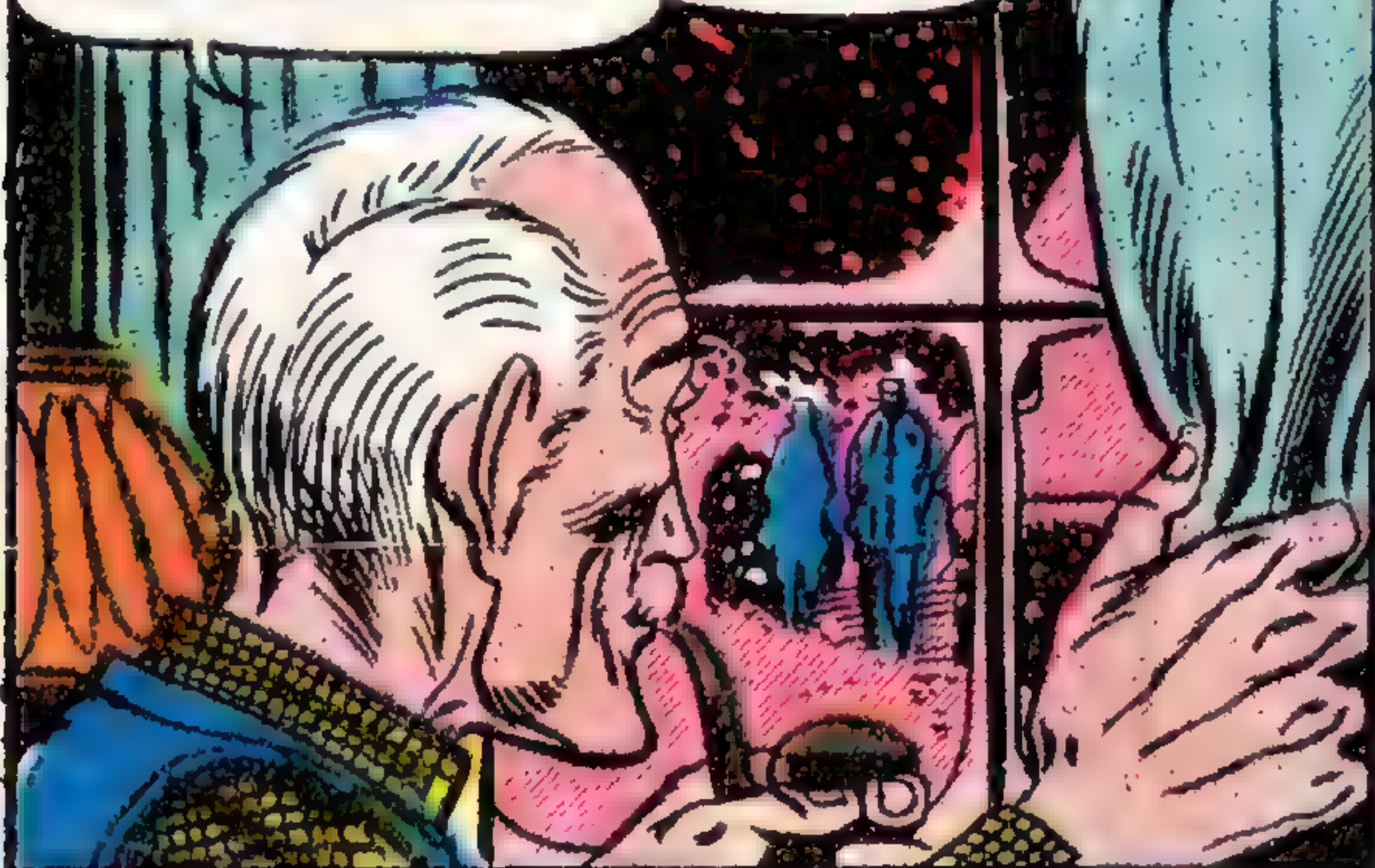
Steve Ditko

THEY WERE COMING NOW, THEIR FACES TWISTED BY FEAR FOR SO MANY HOURS, SHINING AT LAST WITH A SMALL FLICKER OF HOPE...

THEY THINK I KNOW THE SECRET OF THE RED SNOW. IT'LL GO HARD ON THEM WHEN THEY HEAR I'M AS MUCH IN THE DARK AS THEY ARE.

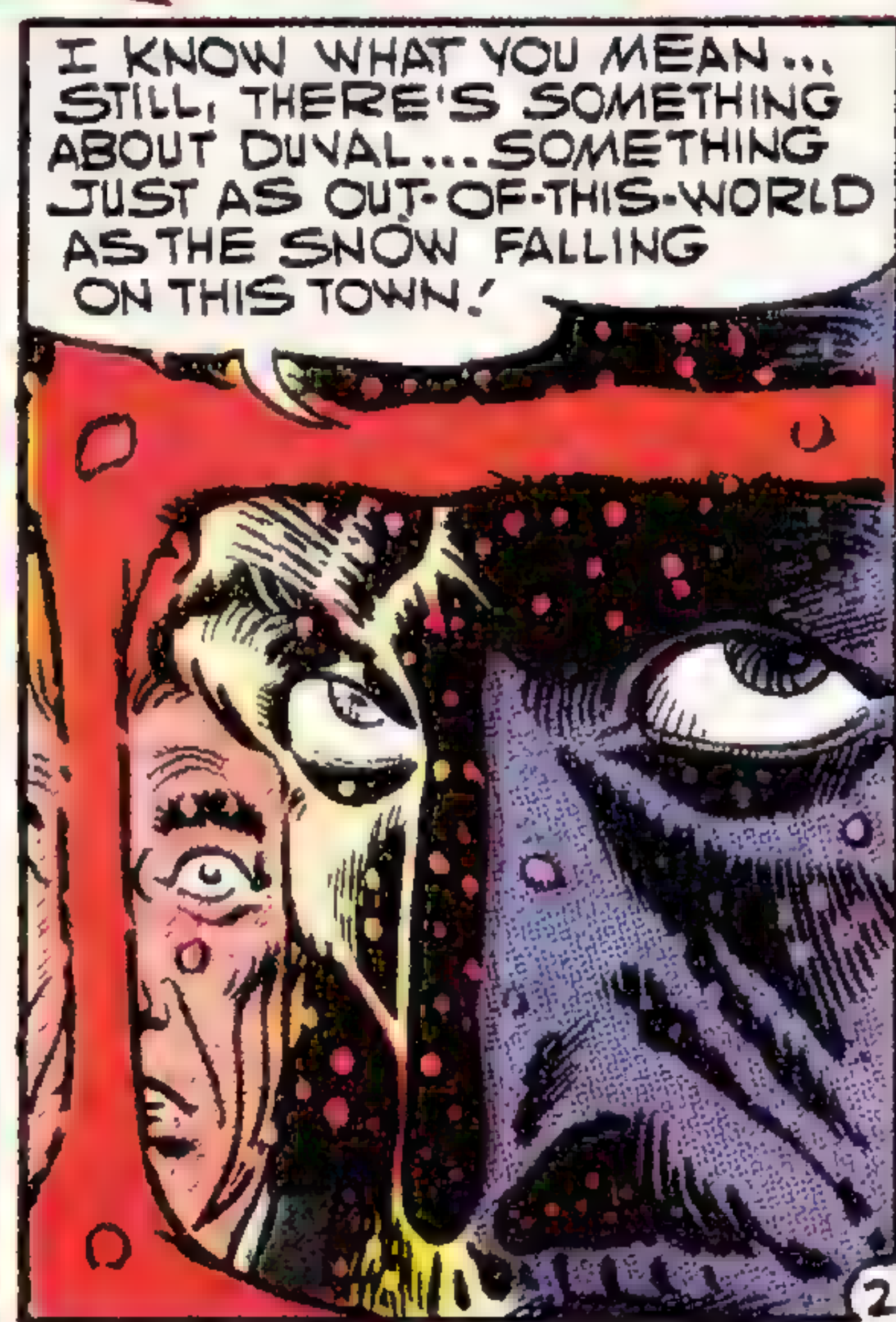
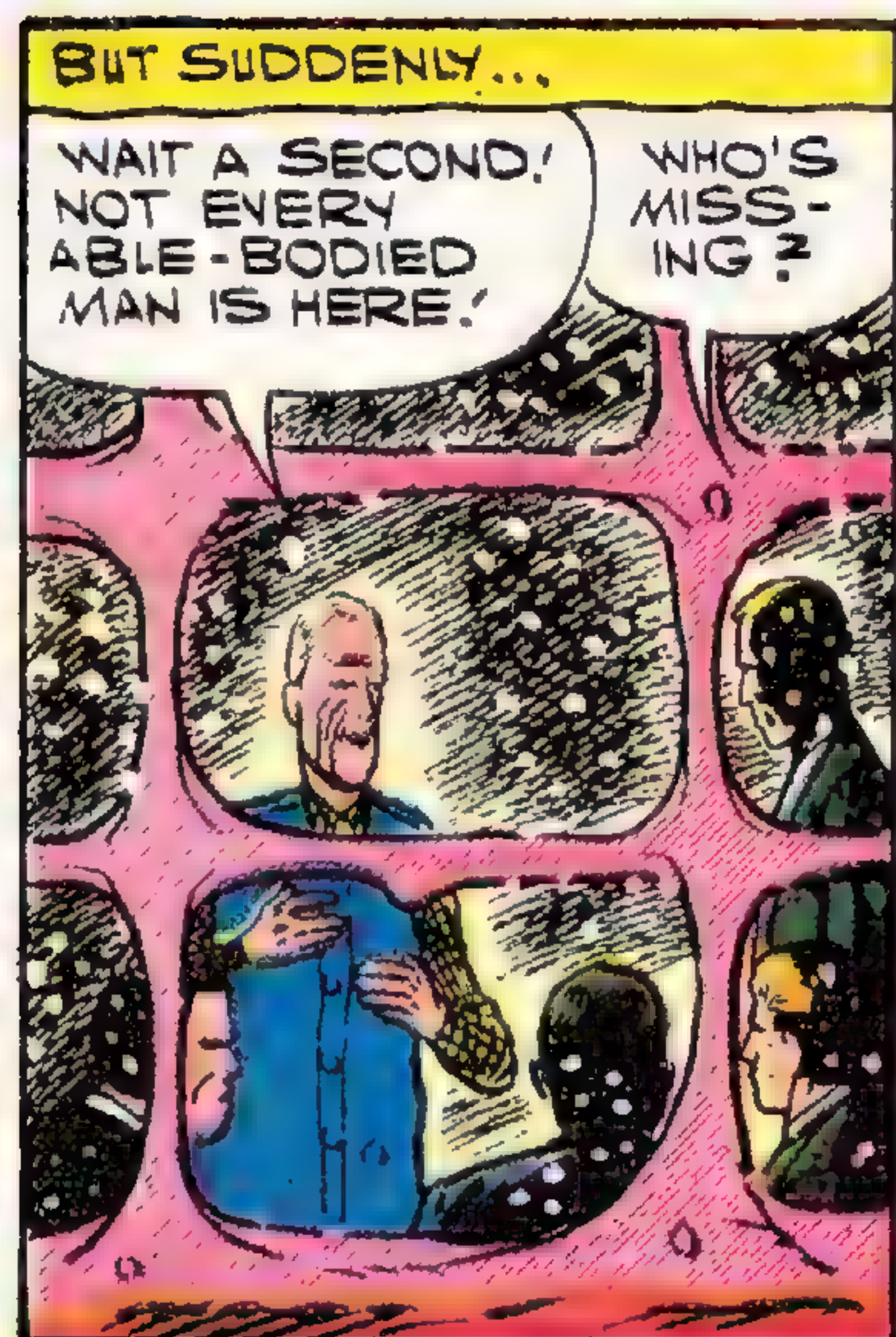
WE'RE ALL HERE, MAYOR.

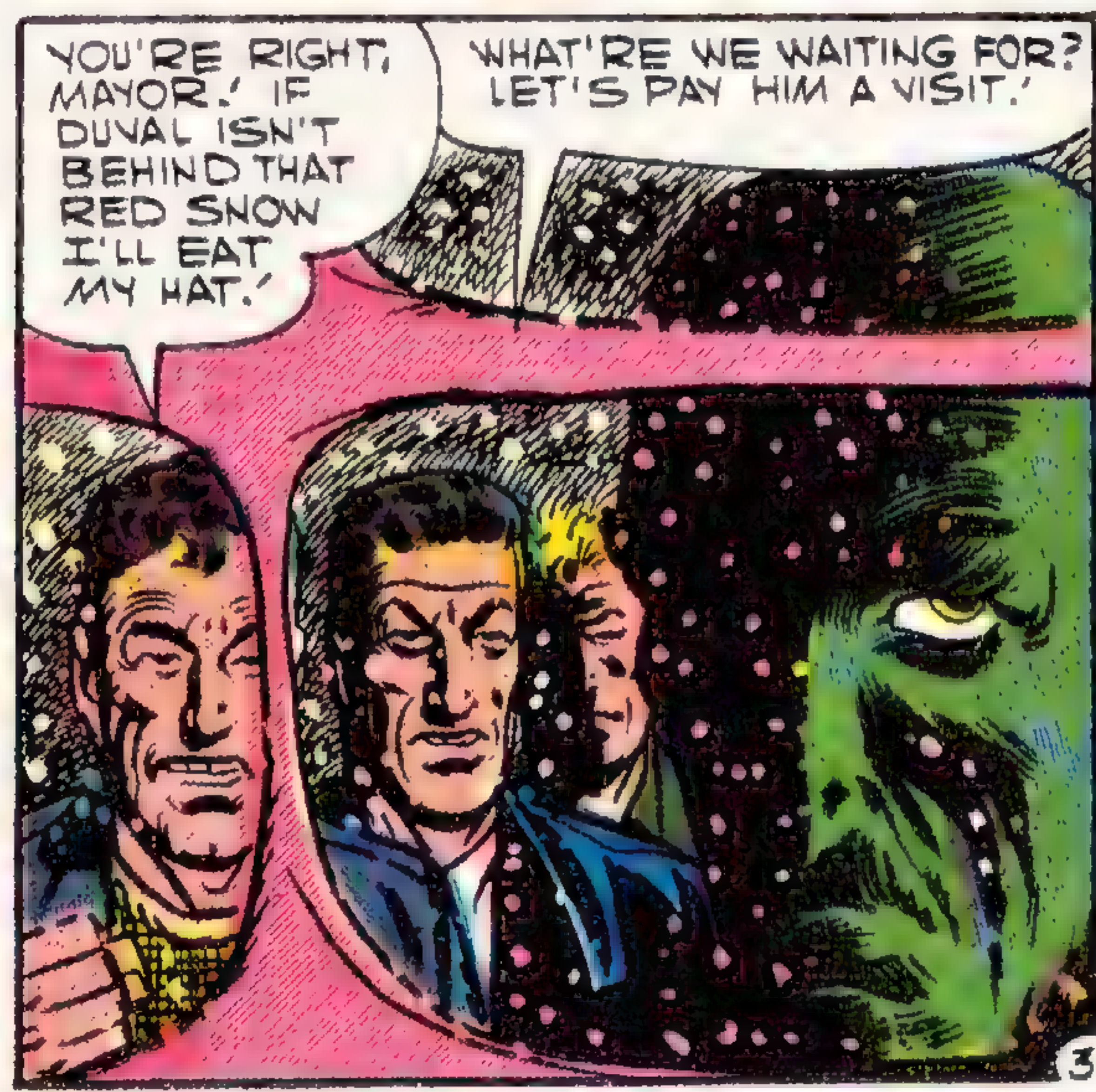
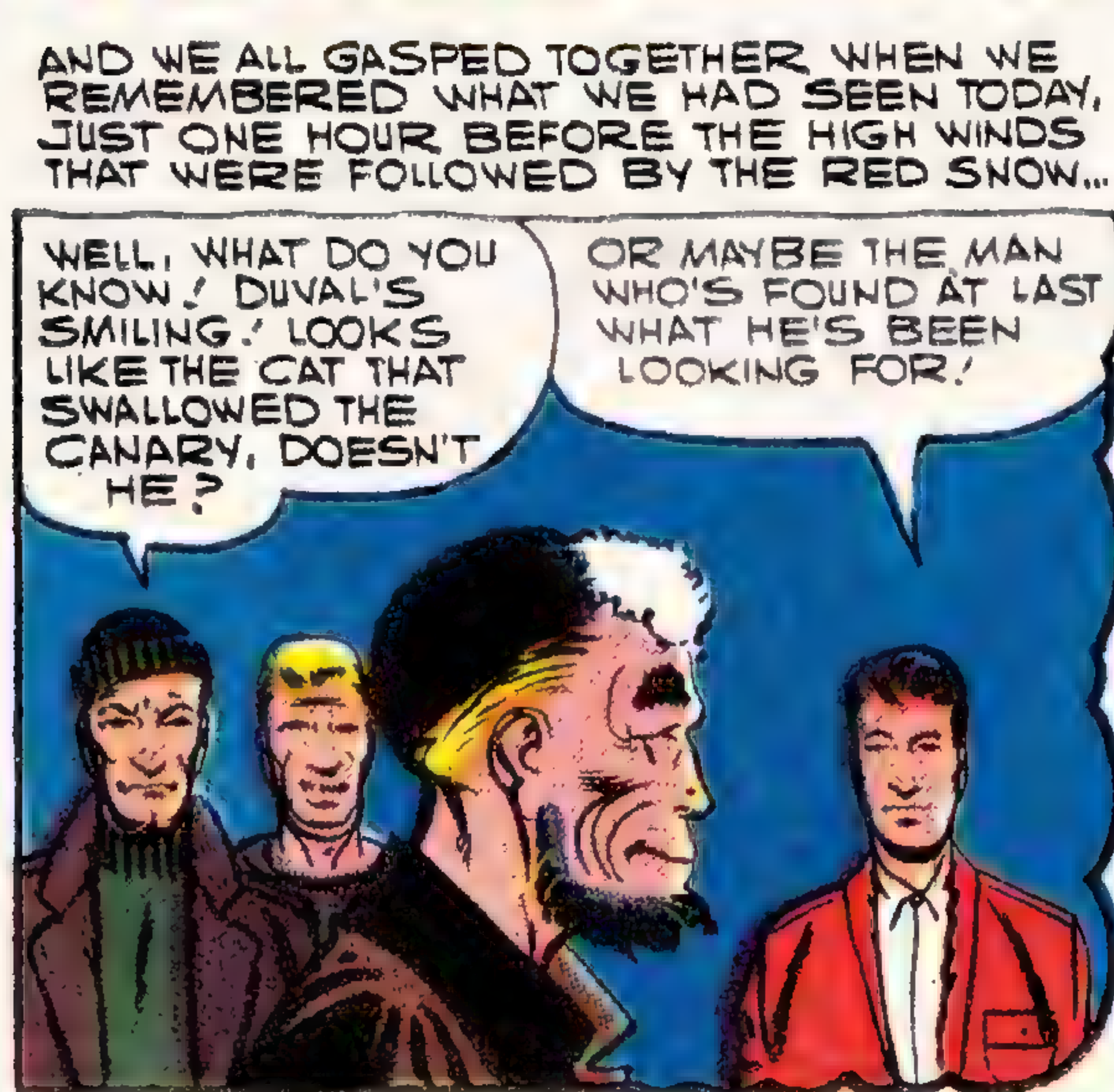
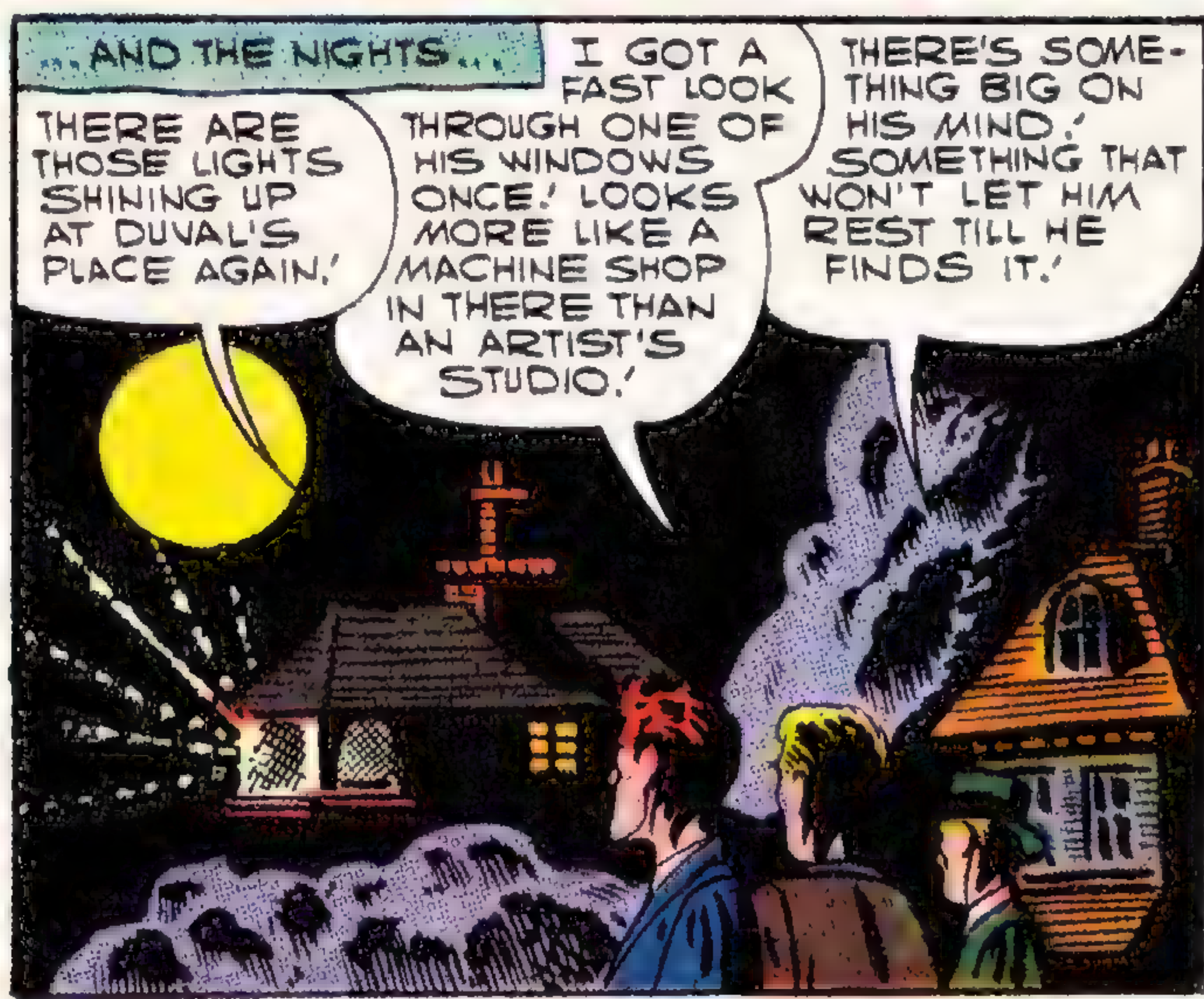
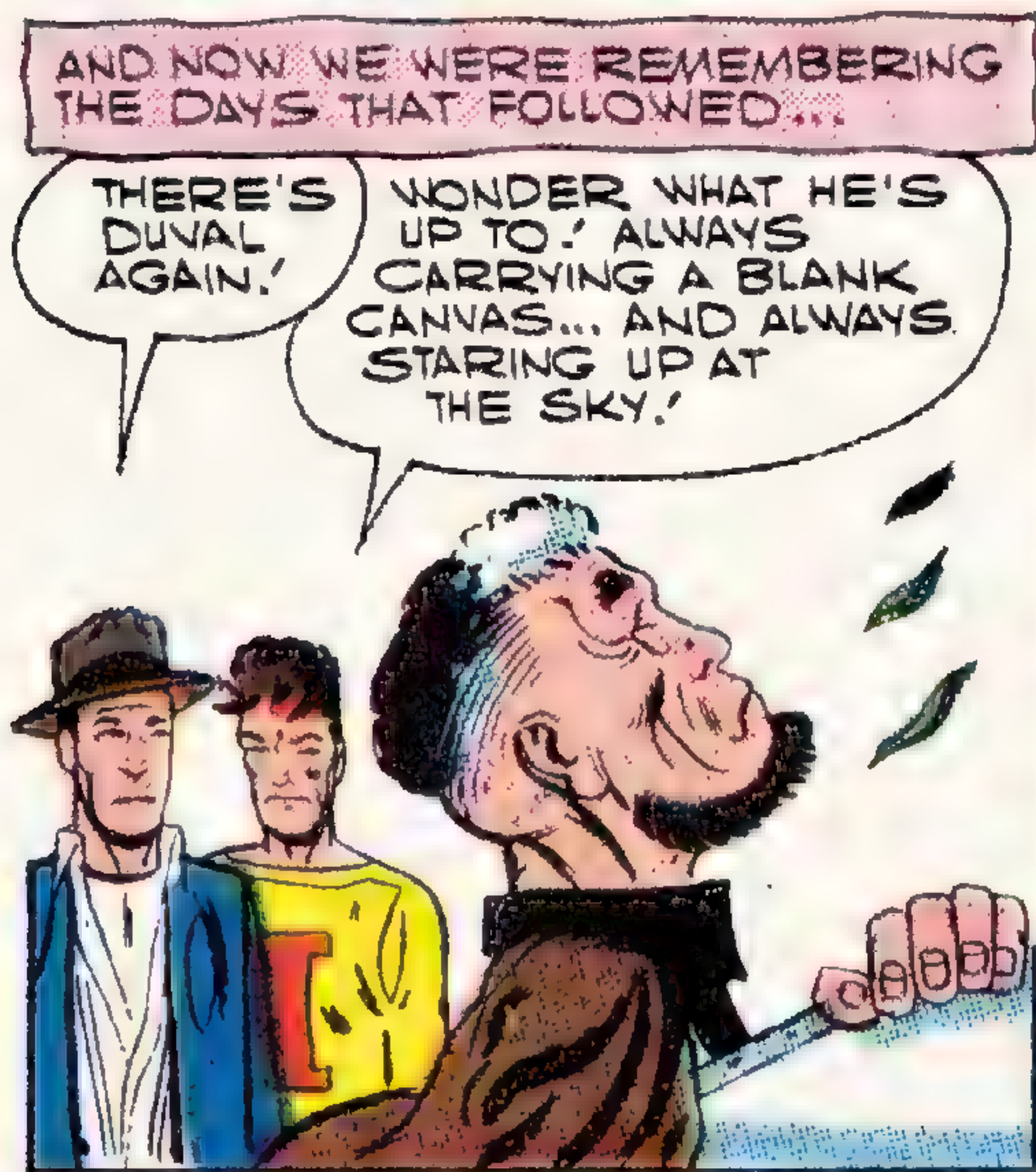
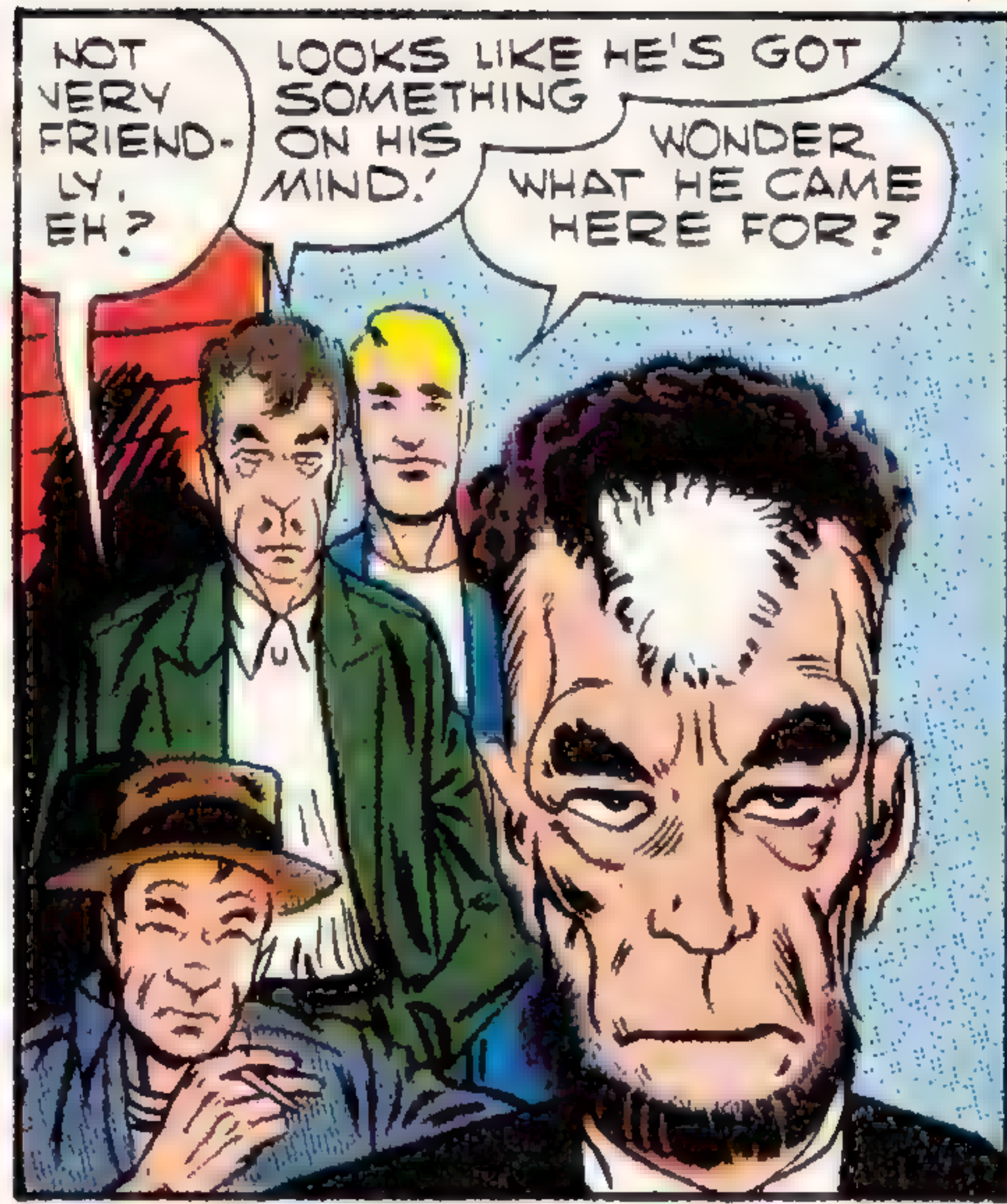
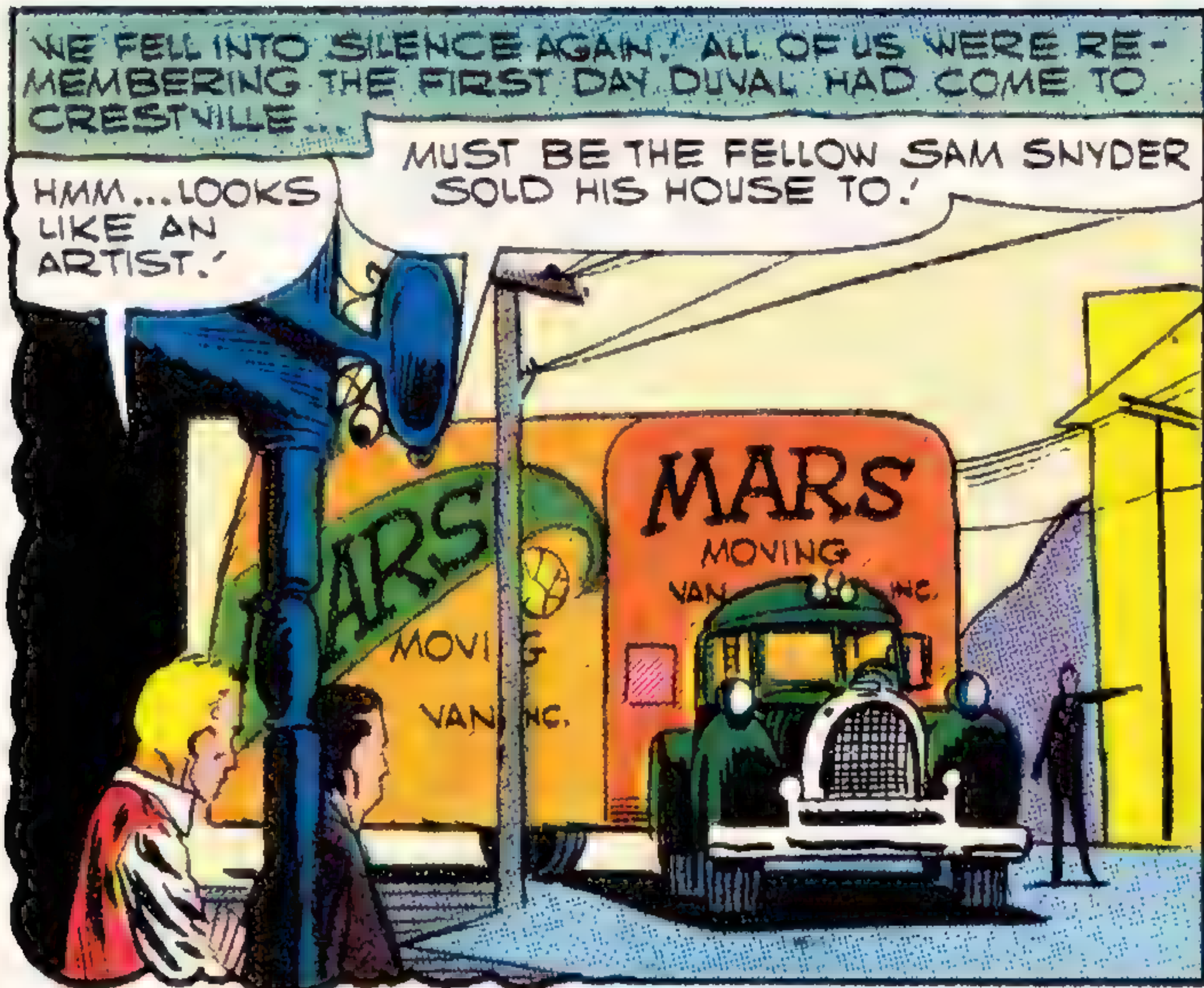
WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT? WHAT HAVE YOU HEARD?





BUT THINKING IS HARD WHEN EVERYBODY'S HEART IS SO CHOKED UP WITH THE NAMELESS FEAR INSPIRED BY THOSE BIG RED FLAKES STILL DROPPING SOUNDLESSLY ON CRESTVILLE...





WHAT WERE WE WAITING FOR? FOR THE NAME-
LESS DREAD TO RELAX ITS STRANGLEHOLD
AND LET OUR FEAR-STIFFENED LEGS CARRY
US UP THE STEEP PATH WE'D HAVE TO CLIMB
TO DUVAL'S HOUSE? THAT'S WHAT WE WERE
WAITING FOR...



I WAS THE MAJOR!
IT WAS UP TO ME
TO MAKE THE
FIRST MOVE...

I'M GOING UP
THERE, MEN! EVEN
IF I HAVE TO GO ALONE!



WE'RE
COMING
ALONG!

IT WOULDN'T BE
FAIR TO LET YOU
GO UP BY YOUR-
SELF!

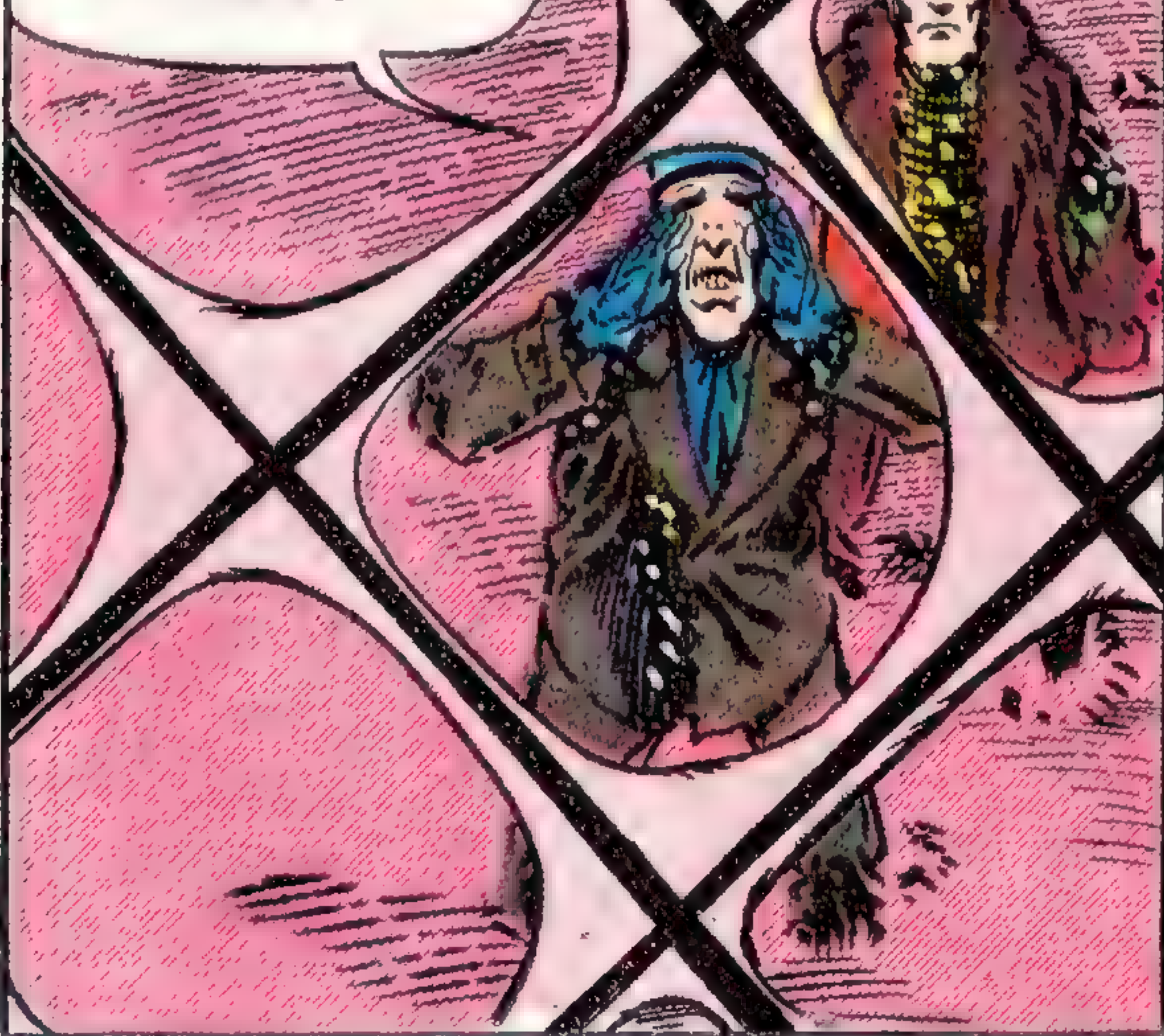


LOOKS TO ME
LIKE THOSE
RAYS FROM
DUVAL'S
HOUSE
HAVE NEVER
BEEN
BRIGHTER!

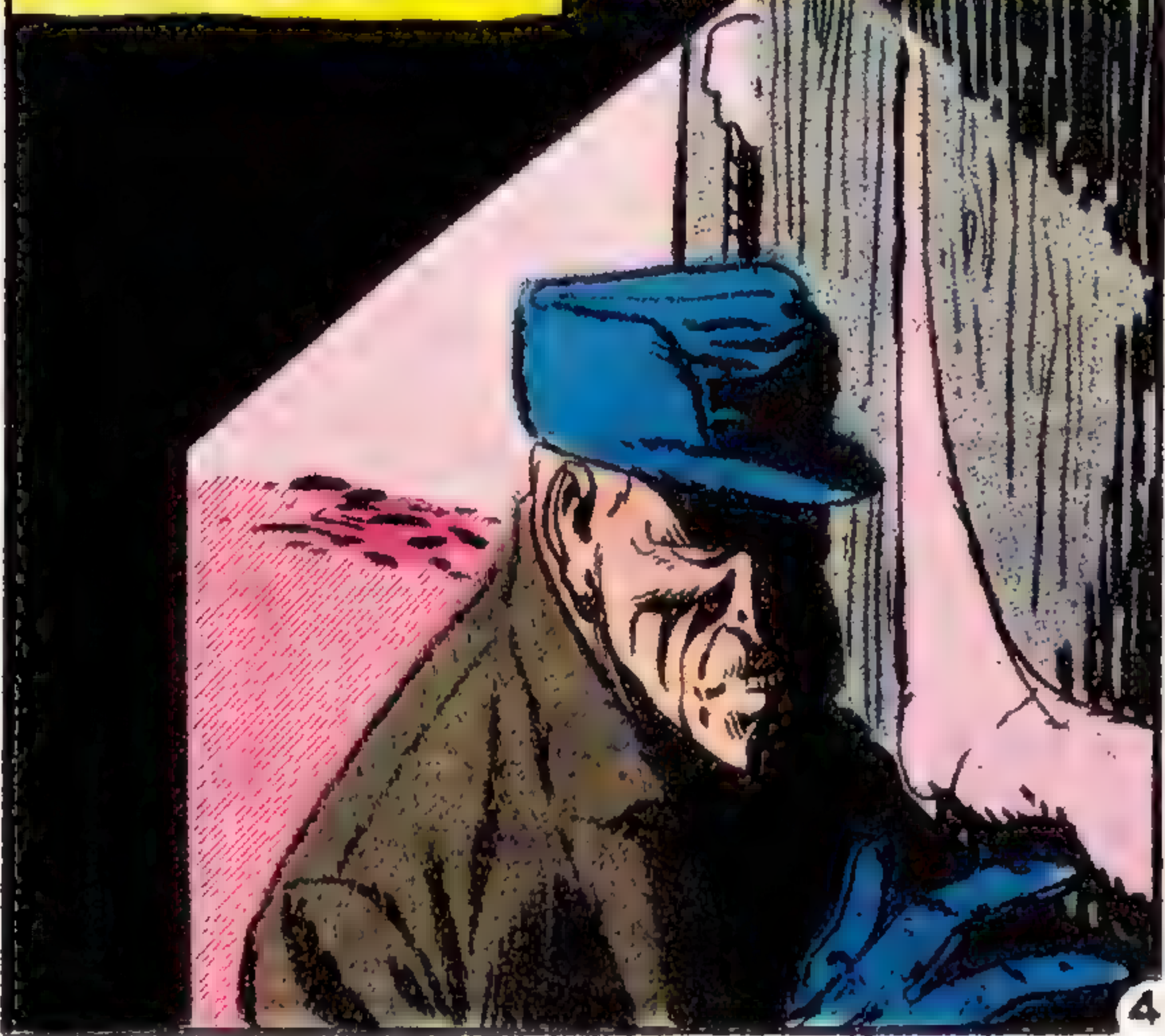
IT STANDS
TO REASON
THEY WOULD
BE... IF
THEY'RE PART
OF WHAT'S
BEHIND THE
RED SNOW!

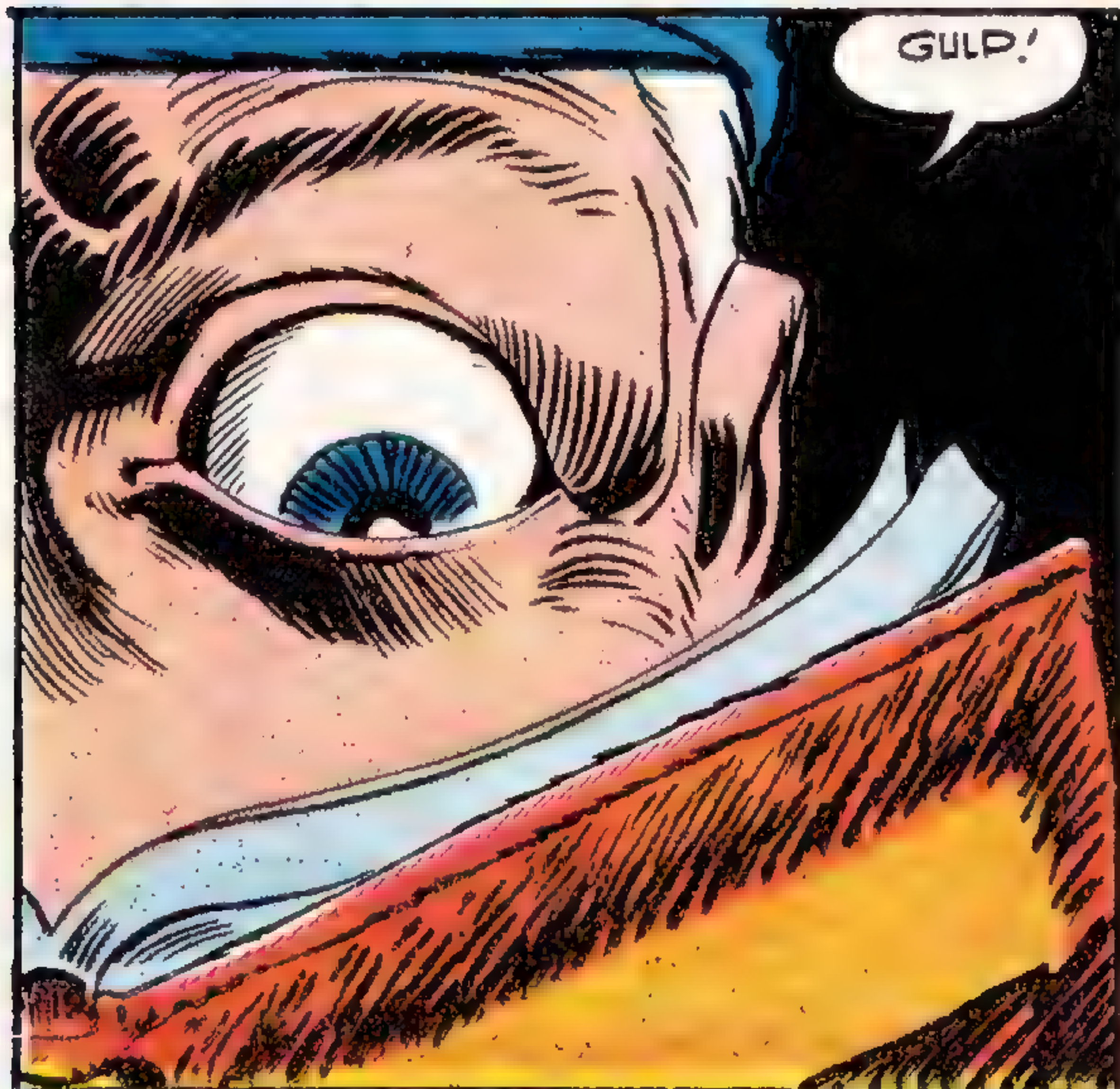
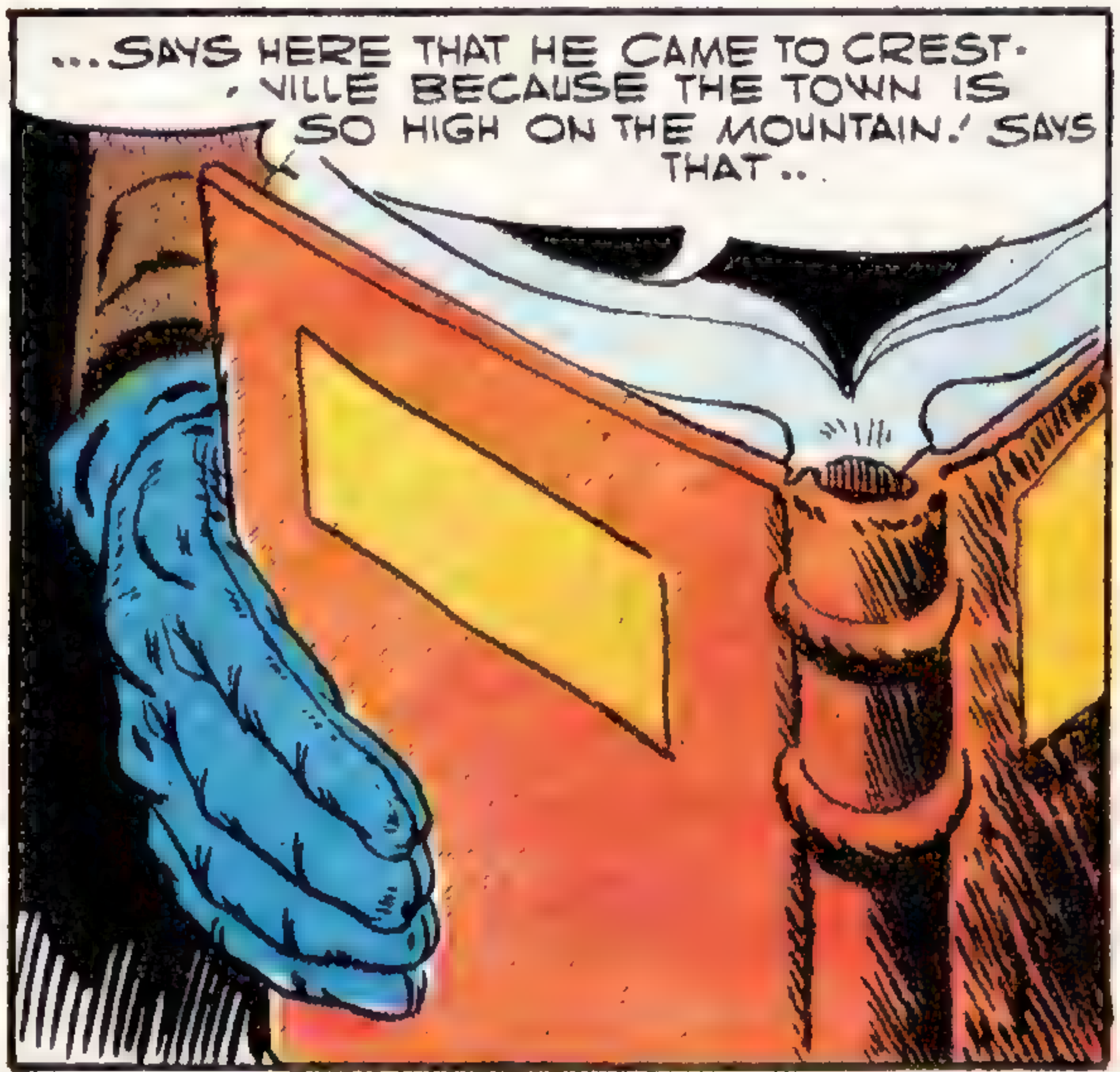
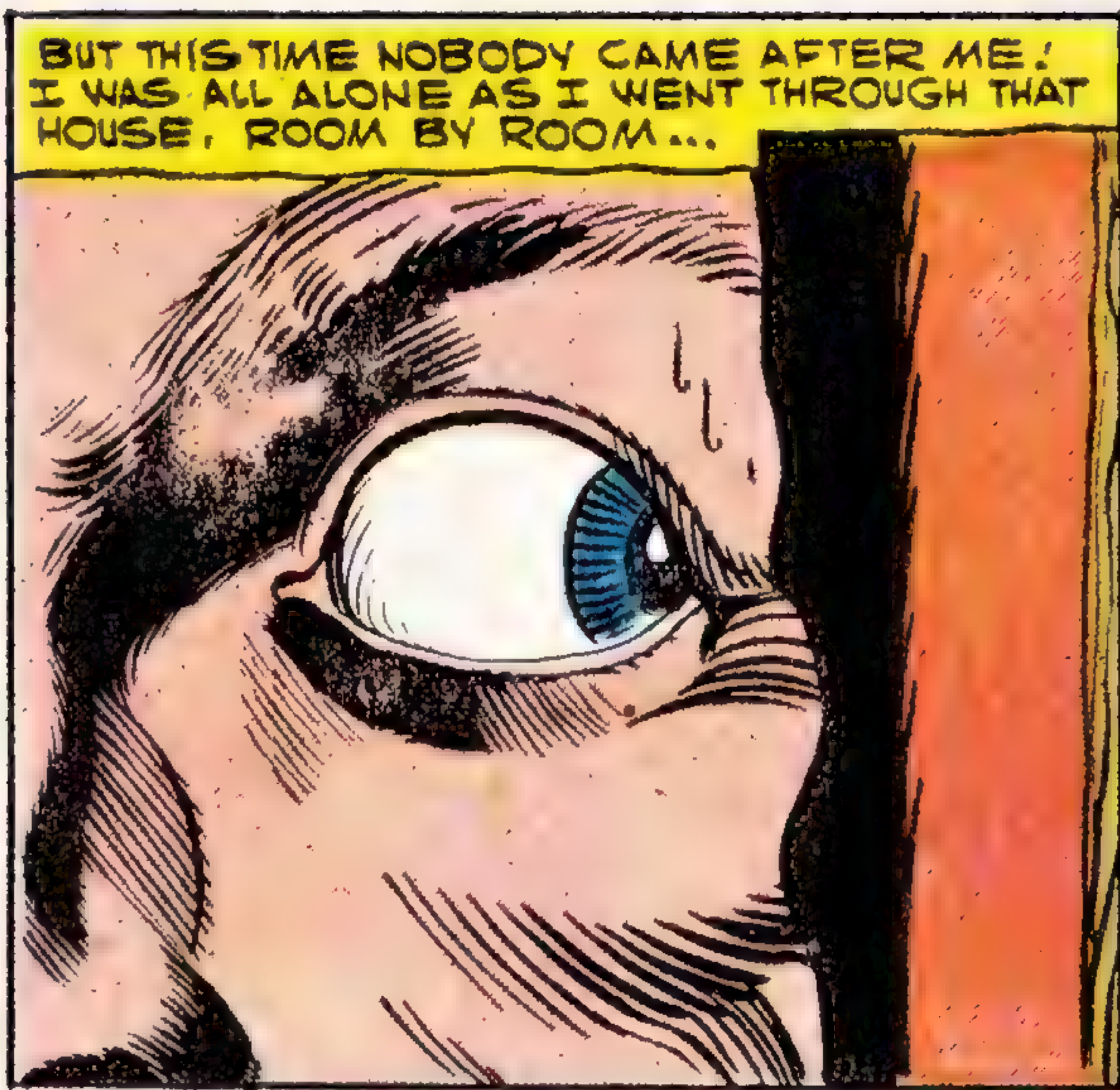


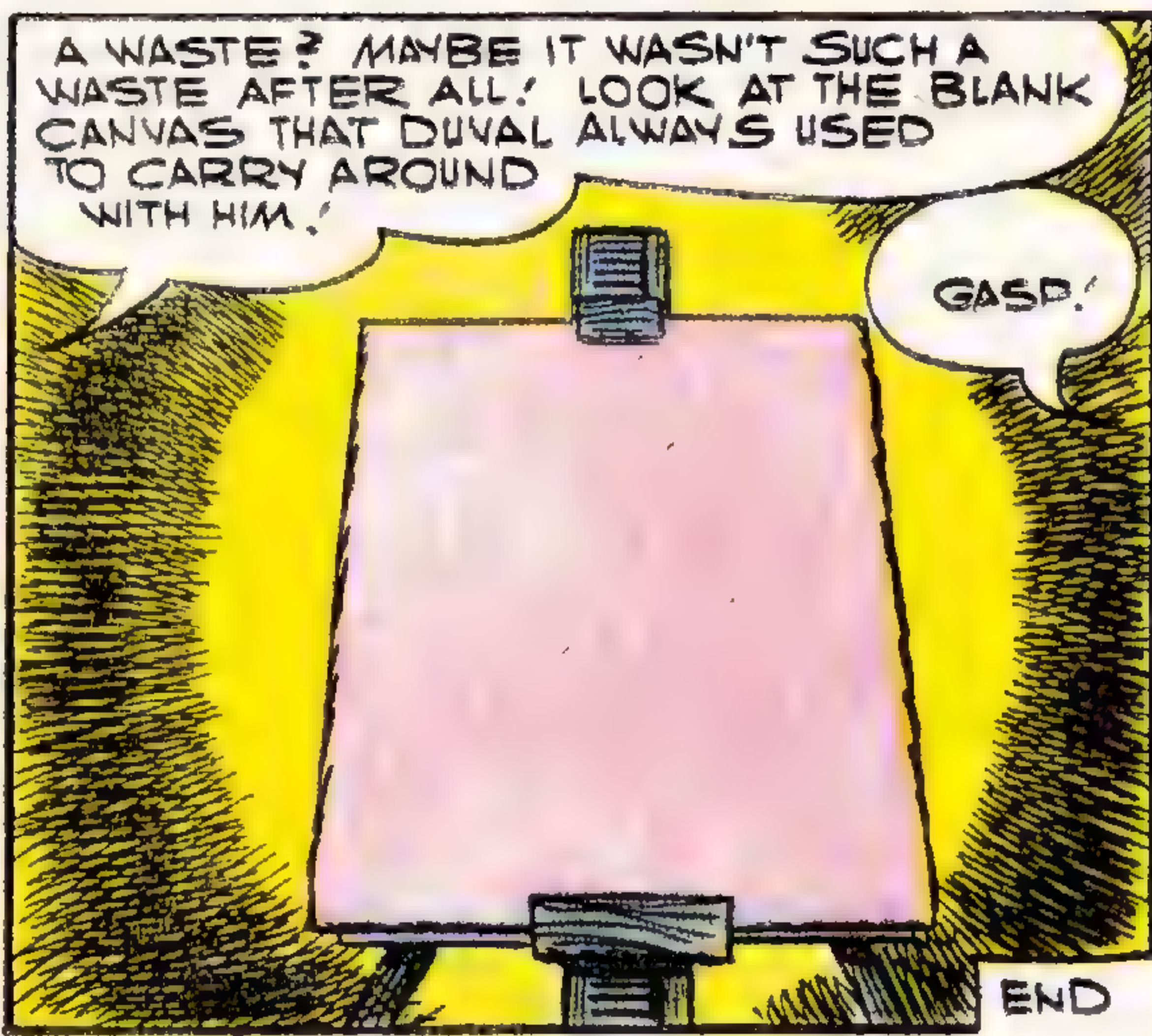
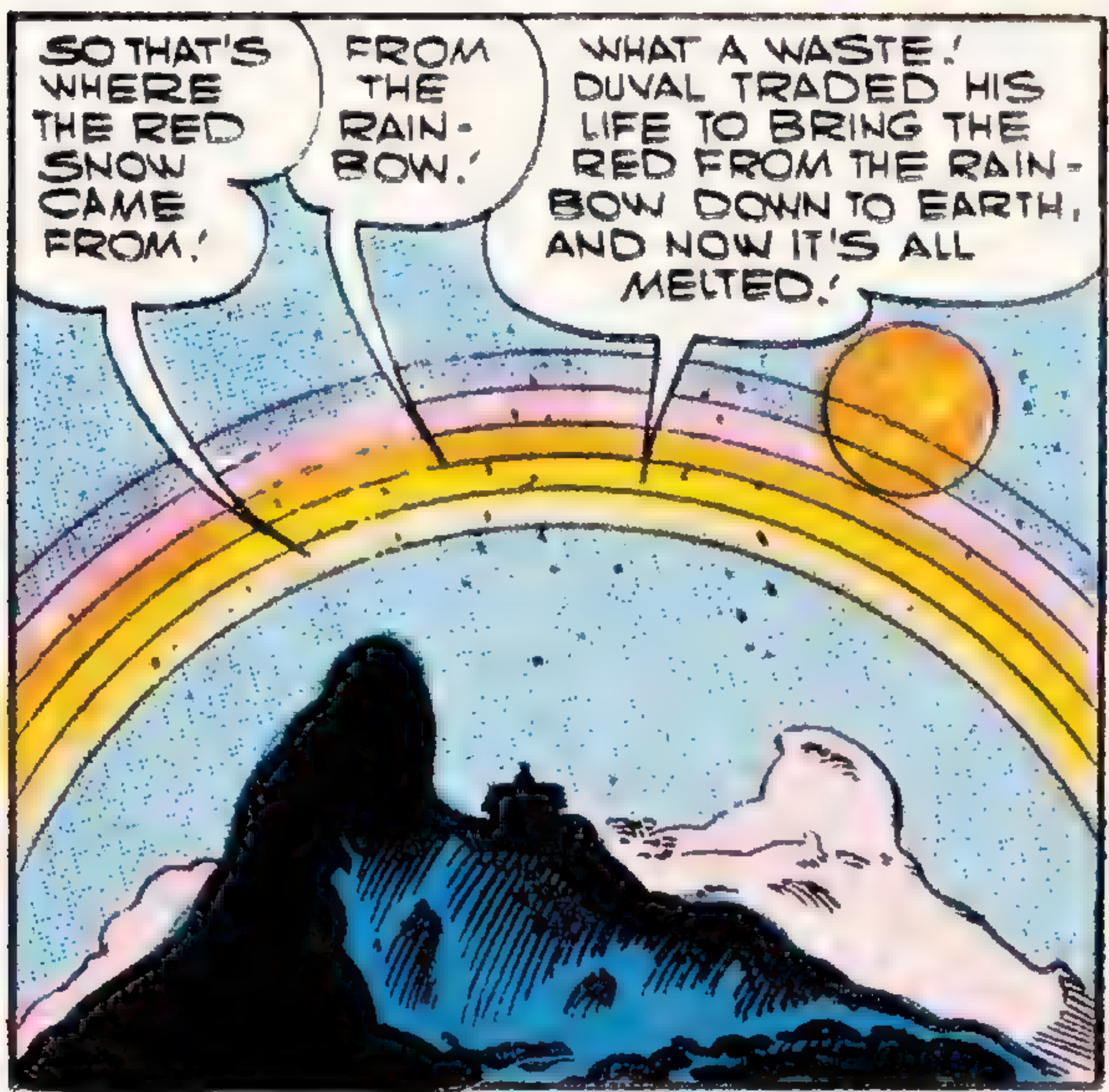
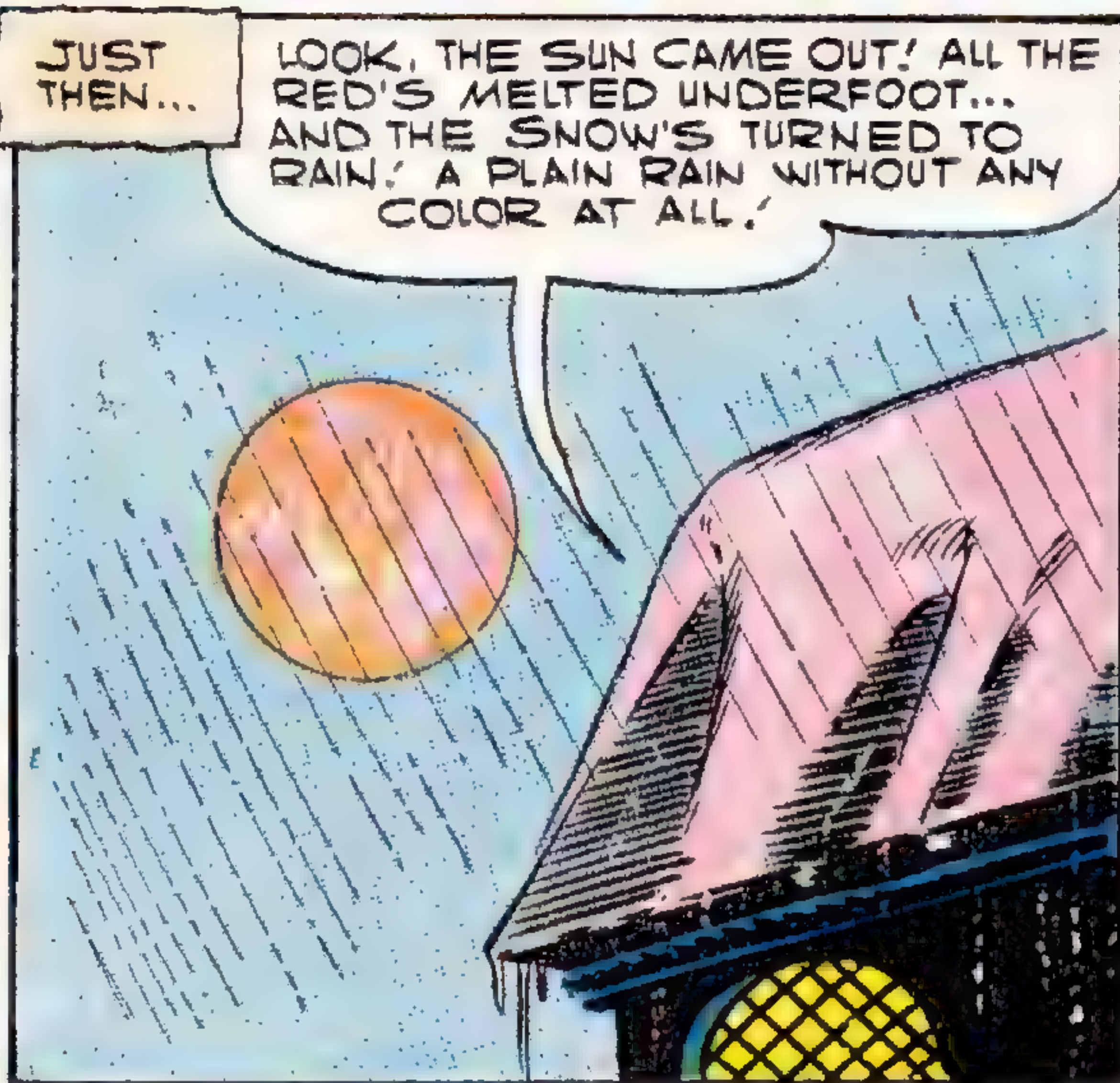
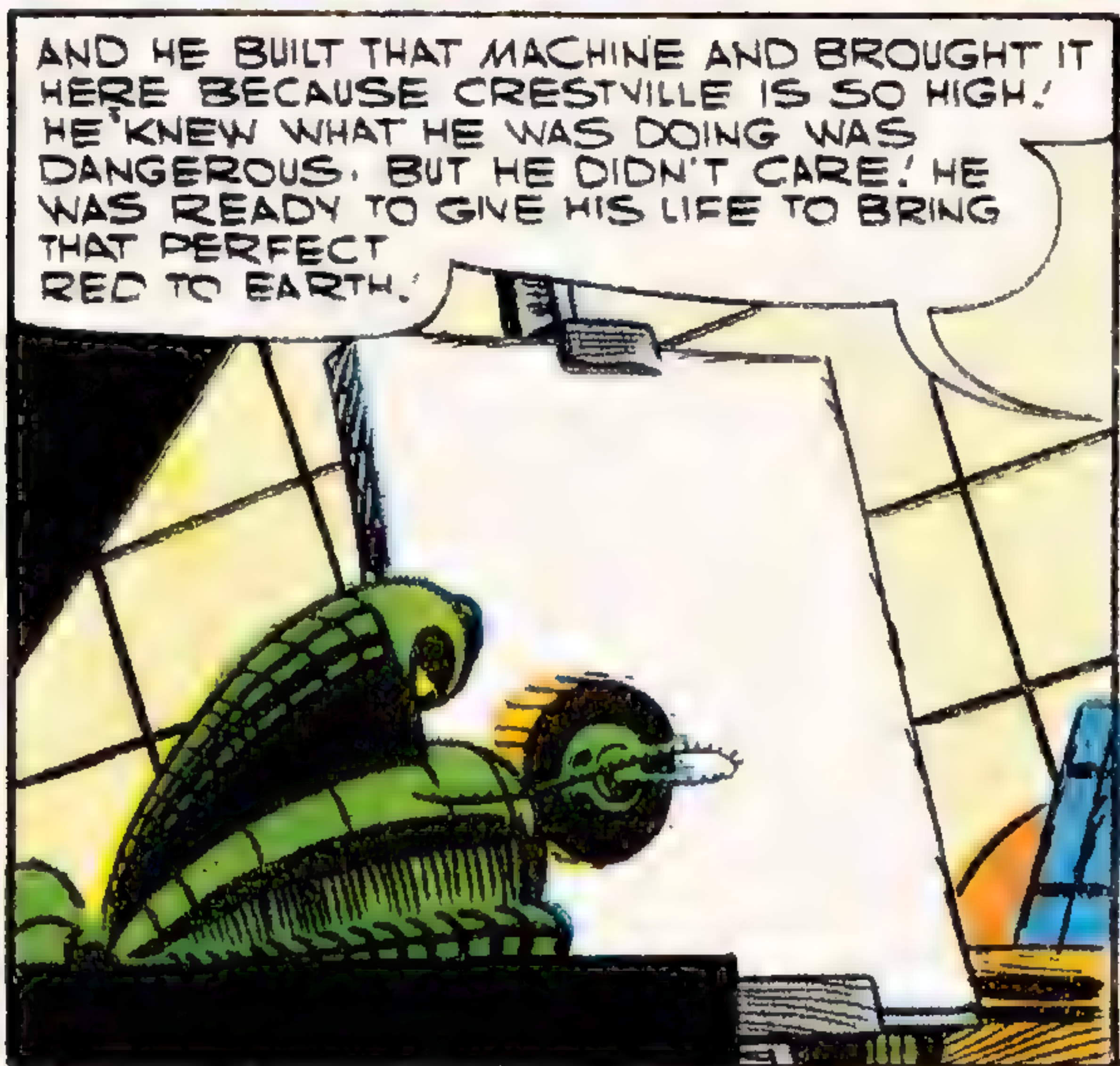
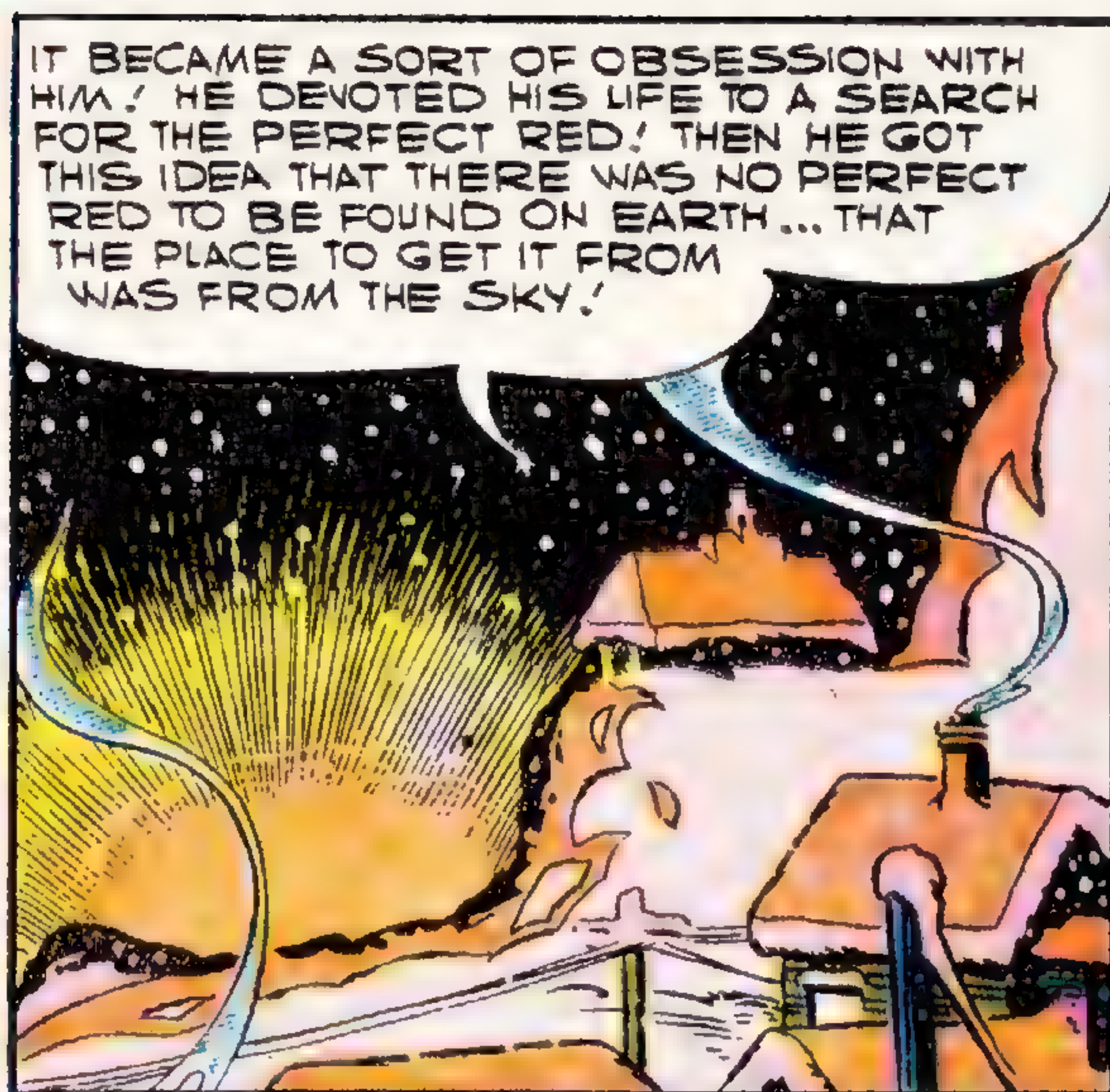
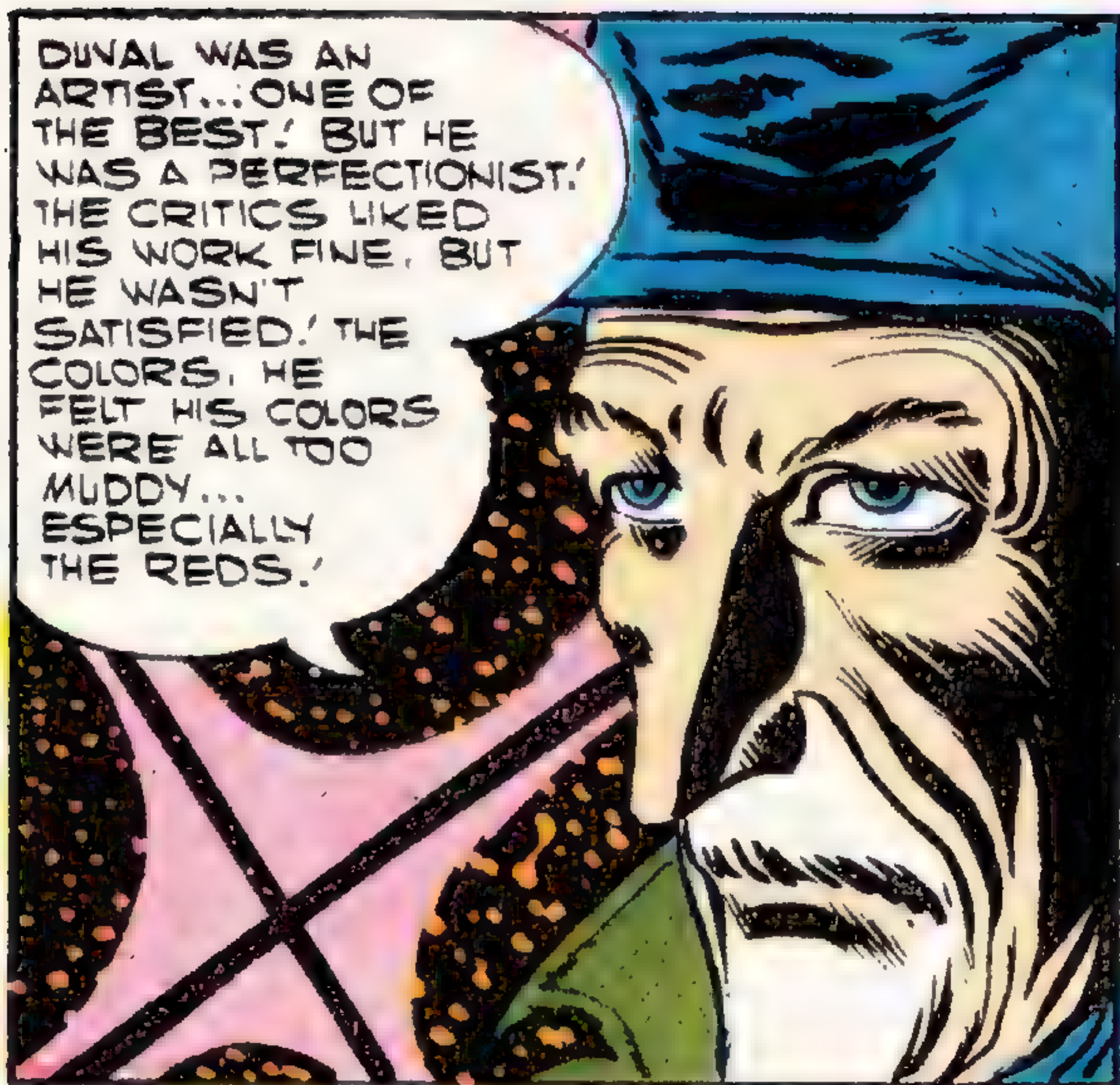
DUVAL! ARE YOU
IN THERE!



NOBODY ANSWERED! AGAIN I HAD TO MAKE
THE FIRST MOVE...



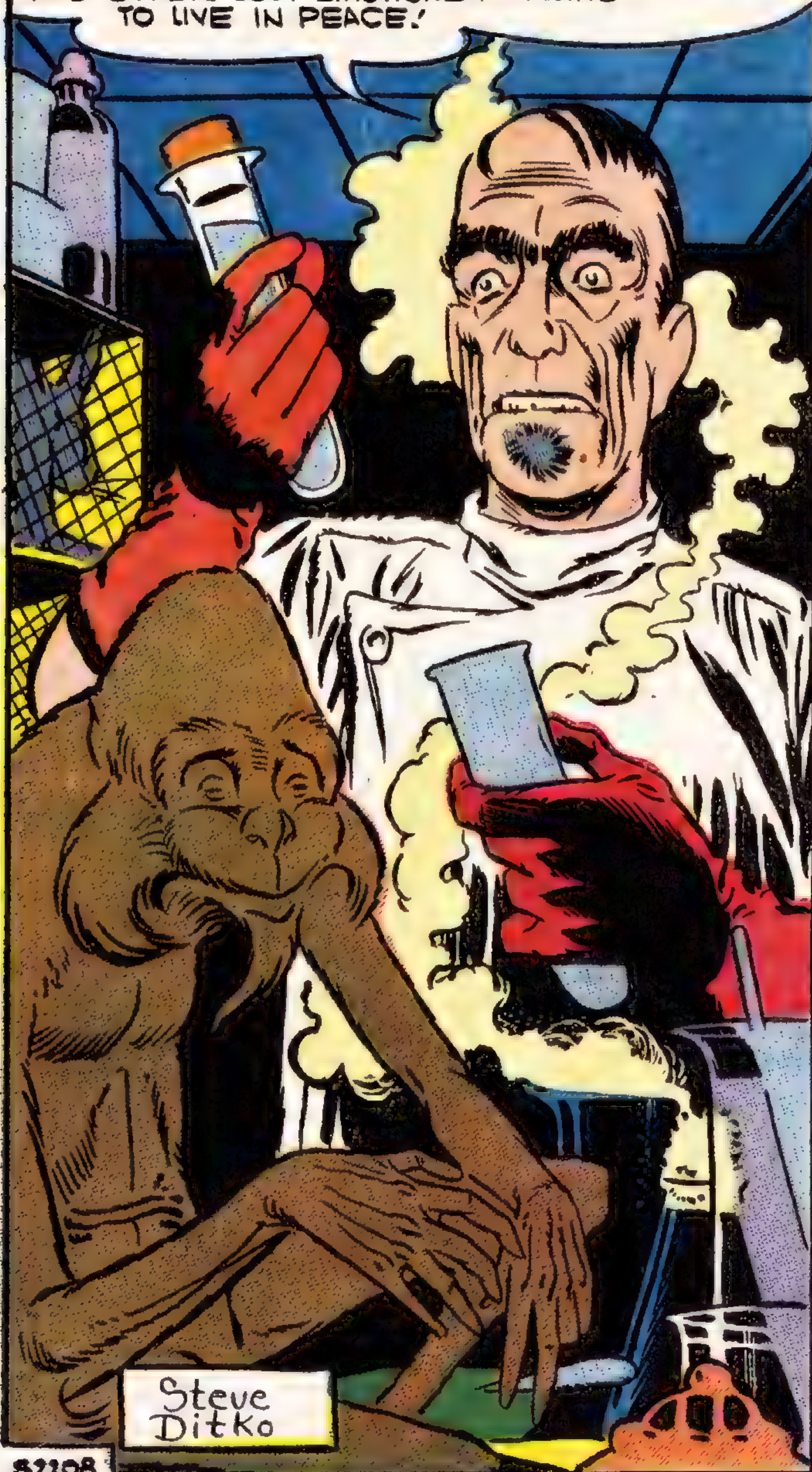




NOBODY HERE IN CRESTVILLE WILL EVER FORGET THAT NIGHT!

PLAGUE

THE GERM CULTURE IS PERFECT! I WILL SPREAD A PLAGUE OVER THE ENTIRE EARTH! NOT A SINGLE HUMAN WILL ESCAPE! ALL WILL BE PETRIFIED LIKE THESE ANIMALS IN MY LABORATORY! BUT A YEAR FROM THIS DATE, THEY WILL COME TO LIFE-- NEW LIFE... FREE OF BELLIGERENT AGGRESSIVENESS AND OTHER UGLY EMOTIONS, WILLING TO LIVE IN PEACE!



Steve Ditko

WITH GREAT CARE HE PLACED THE CULTURE IN THE VAPOR BLOWER AND...

HUMANS NEED ONLY BREATHE THE CULTURE! THE REST THEY WILL DO THEMSELVES! CONTAGION OCCURS IMMEDIATELY WITHOUT CONTACT! I SHALL BE EARTH'S ONLY OBSERVER, FOR I ALONE, AM IMMUNE!

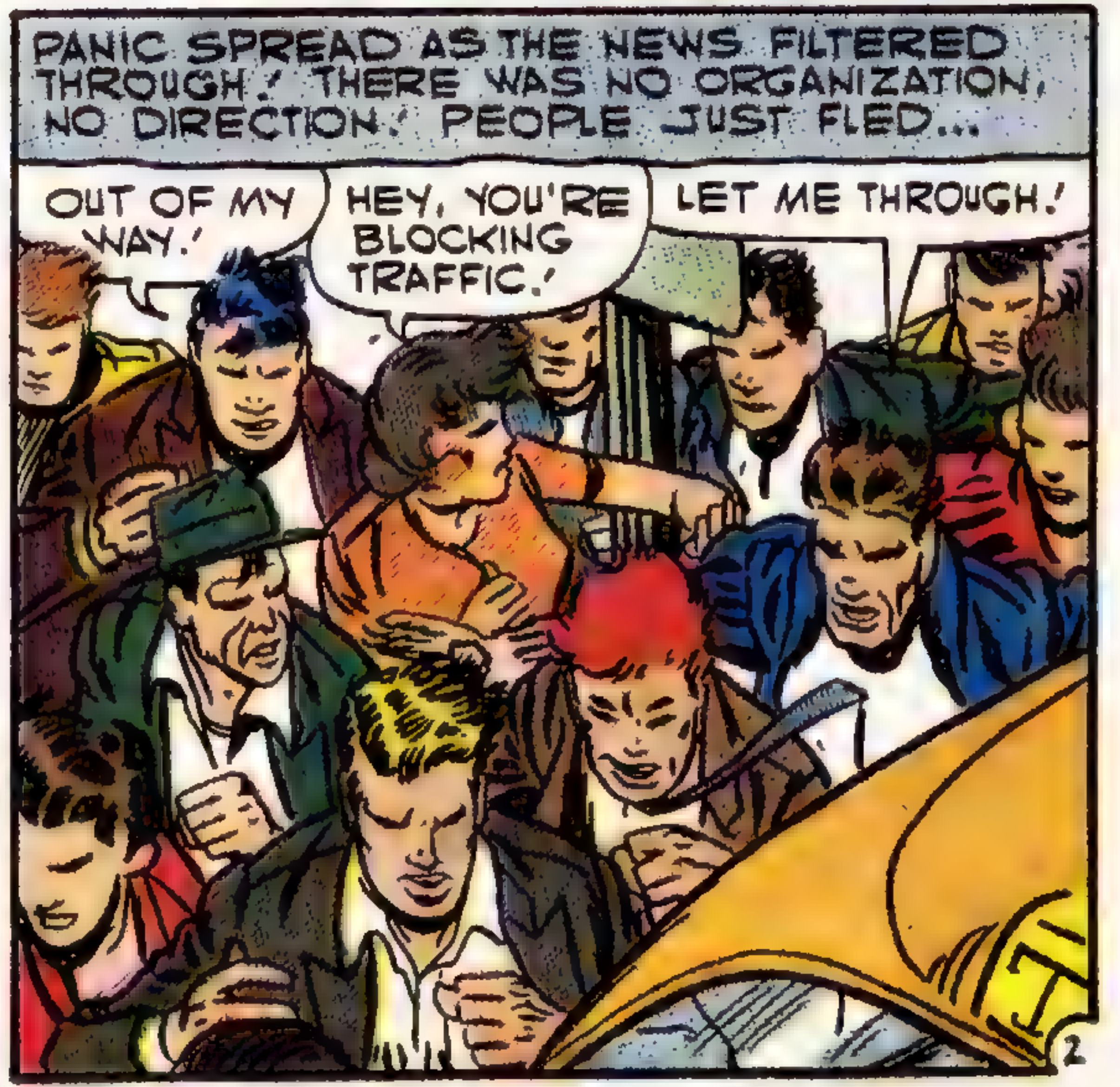
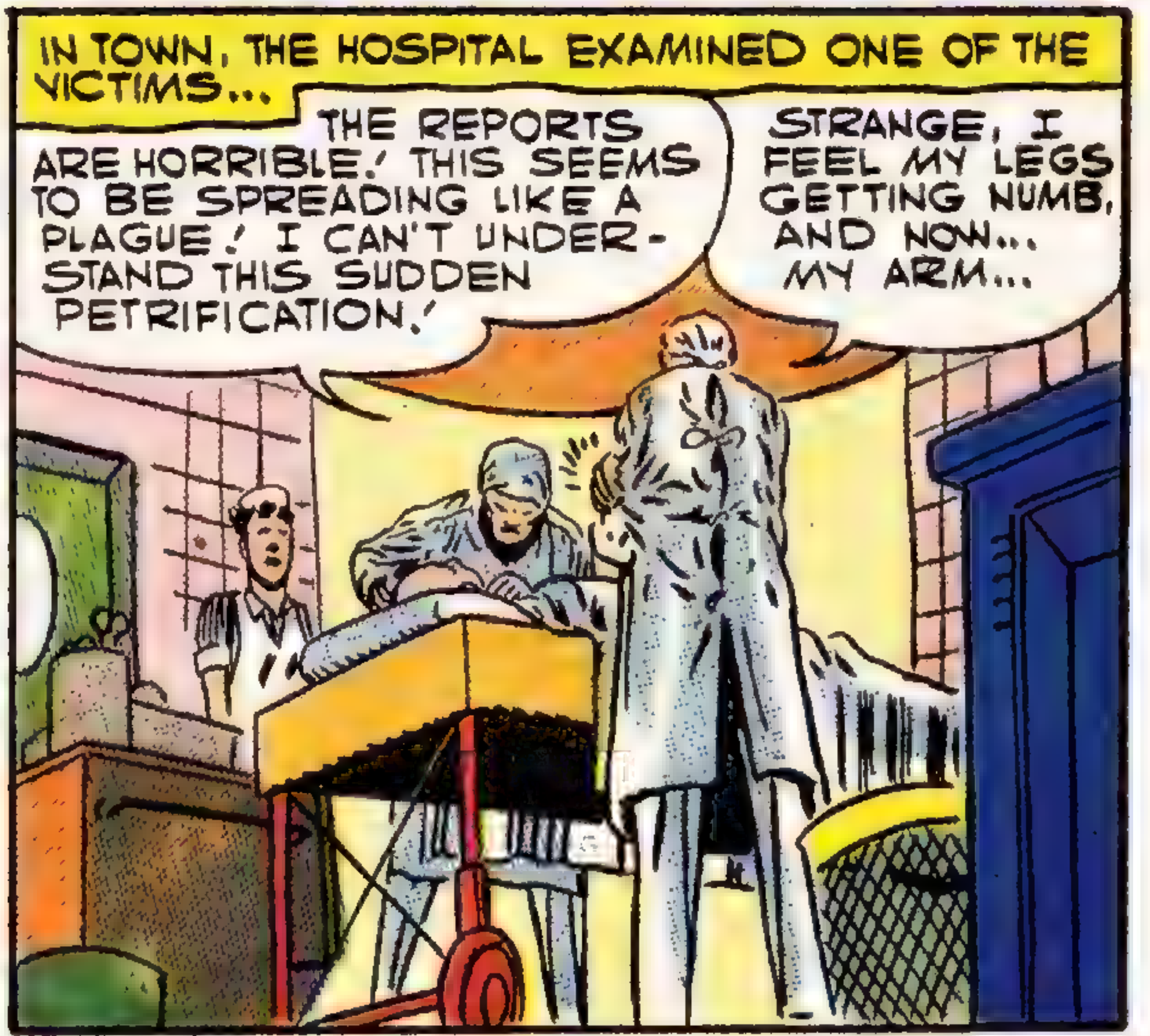
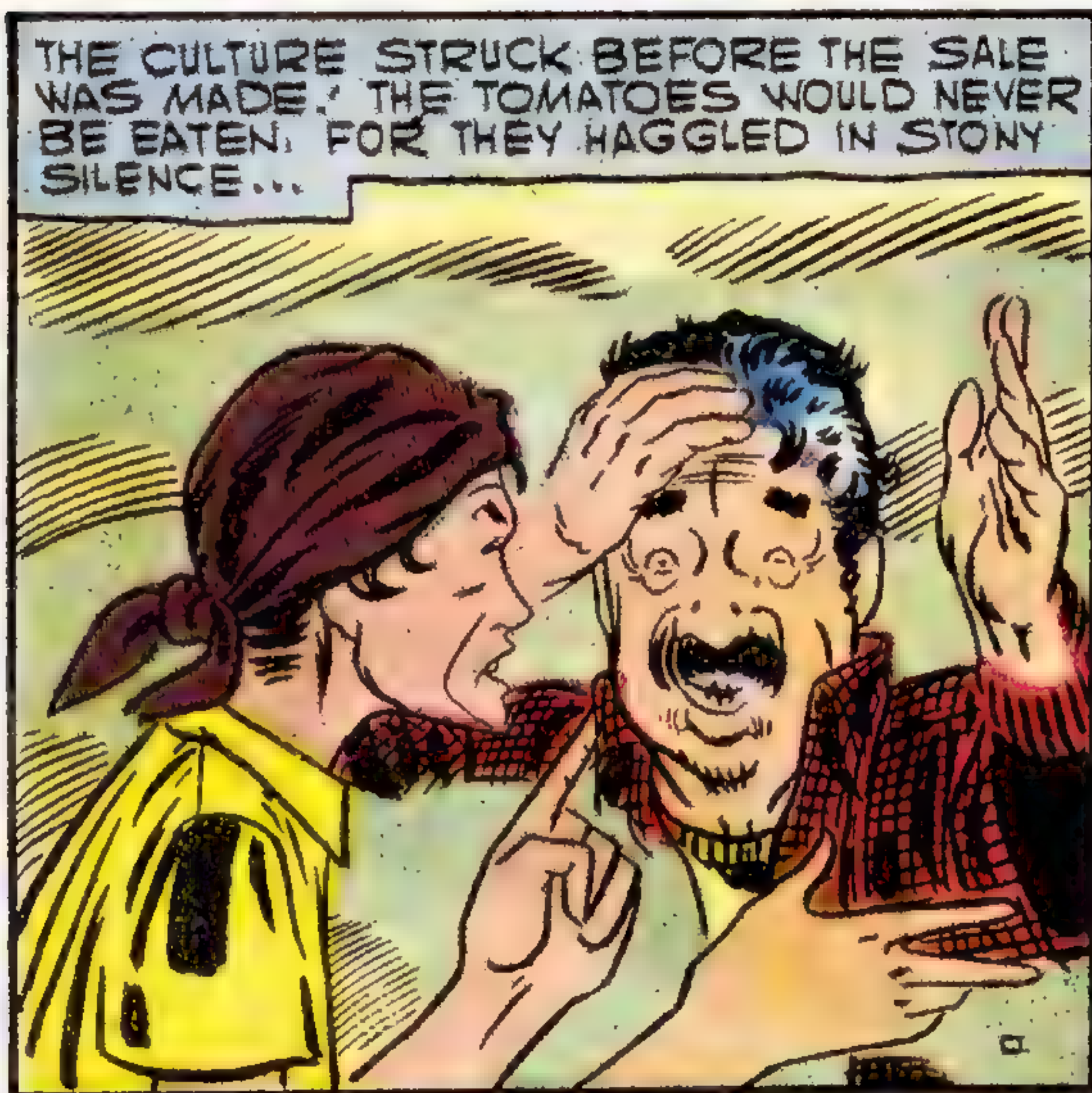
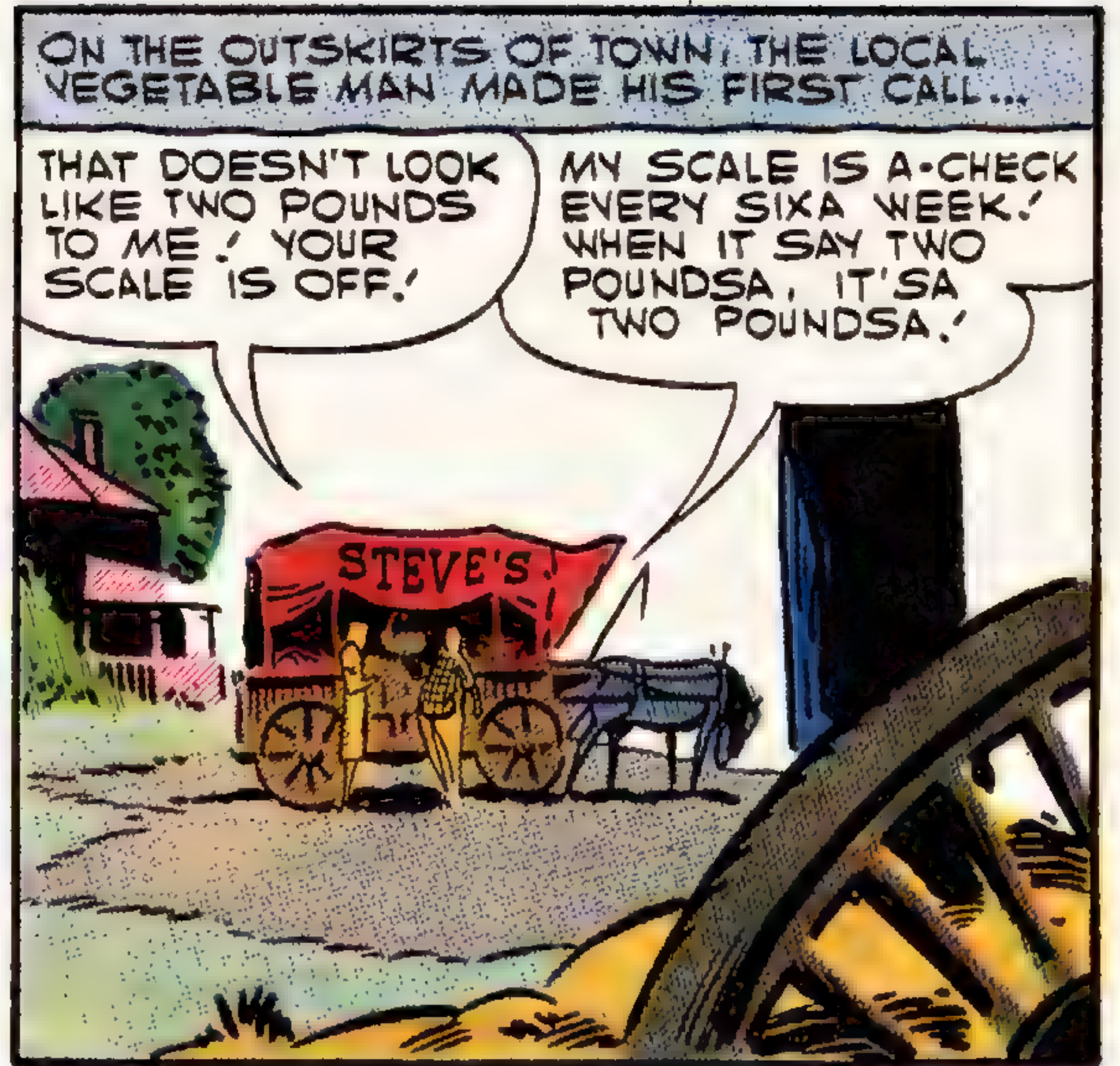
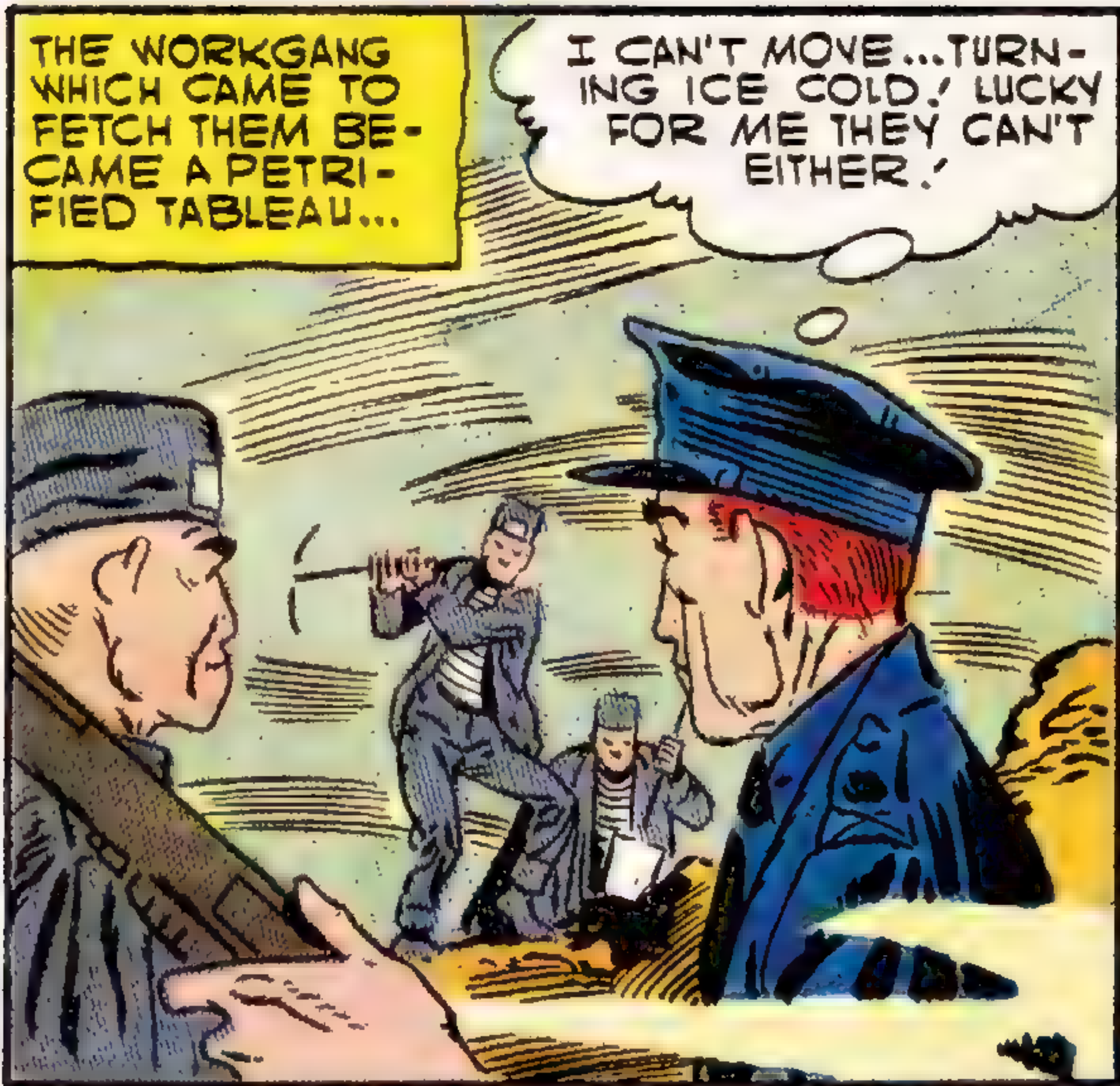


THE FIRST CONTAGION TOOK PLACE TEN MILES AWAY...

HEY, JOE, ALL OF A SUDDEN I GOT A PAIN IN MY BACK AND LEGS! I CAN'T MOVE!

JUST LIKE ME! OW, I CAN'T STRAIGHTEN OUT NO MORE!

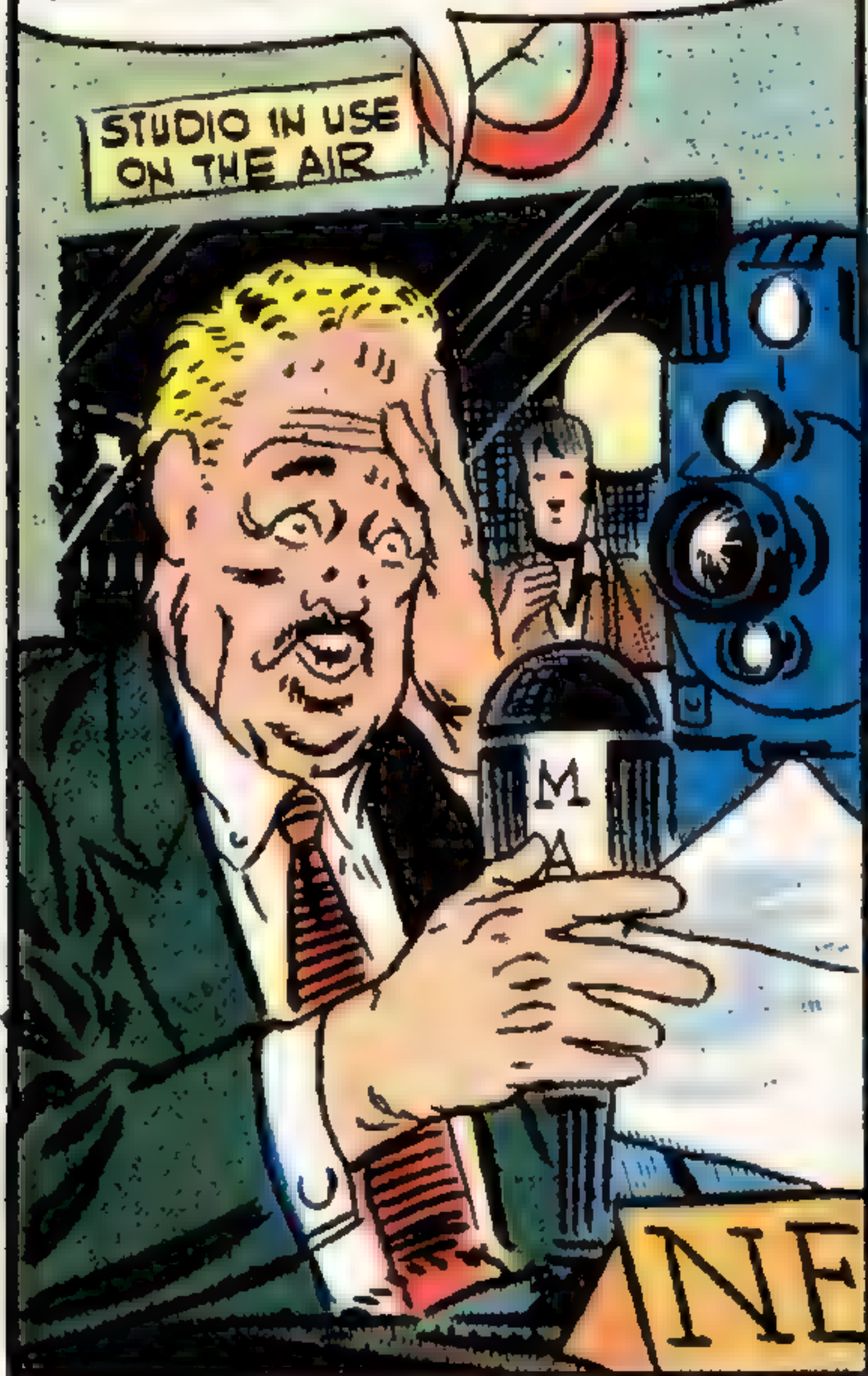




BEFORE ALL SIGNALS WENT DEAD, TWENTY MILLION PEOPLE HEARD...

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, A TERRIBLE PLAGUE IS SWEEPING THE COUNTRY! MEDICAL AUTHORITIES ARE TRYING TO ISOLATE THE PETRIFYING GERM, BUT SO FAR... SO FAR...

STUDIO IN USE ON THE AIR

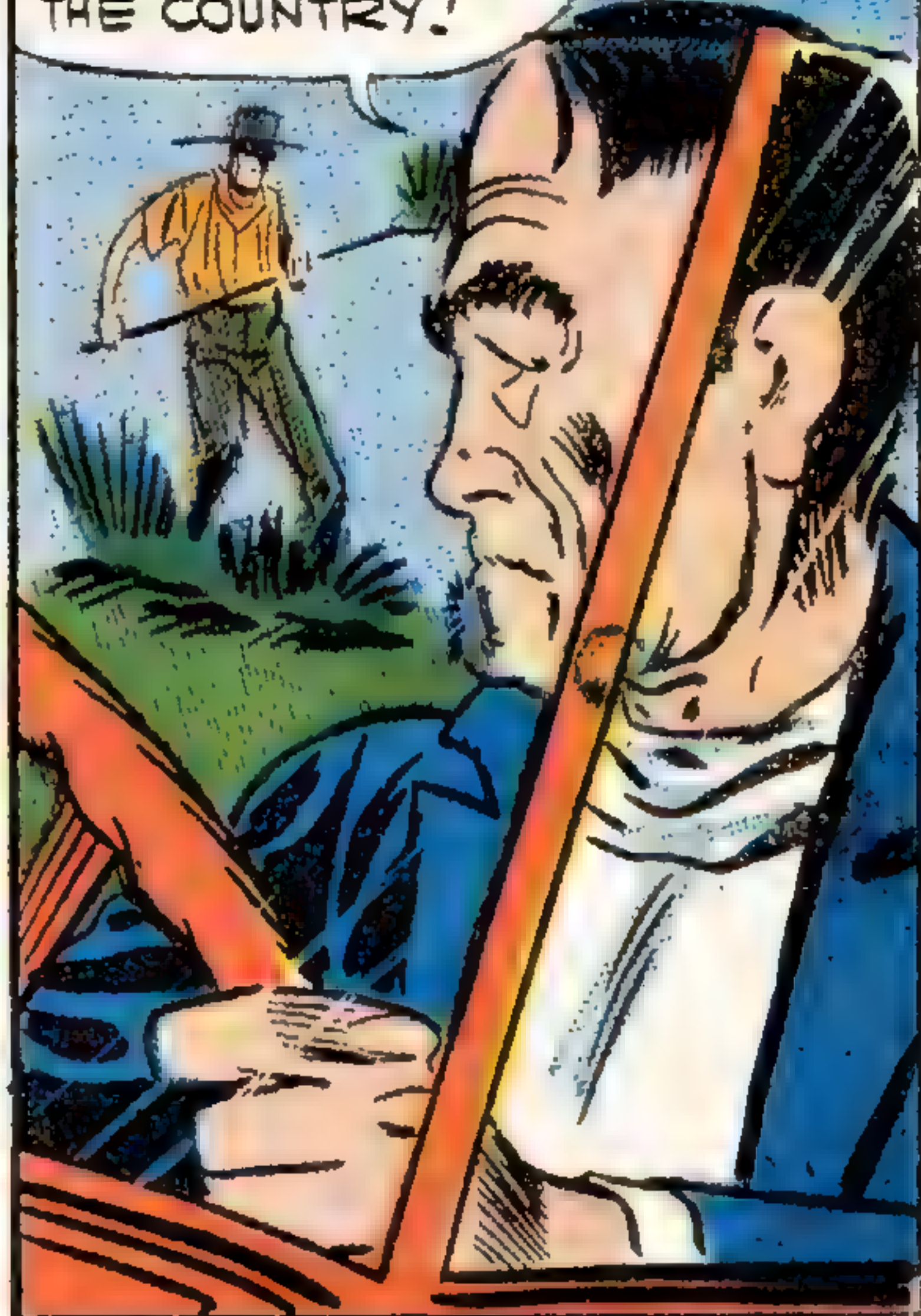


I... CAN'T SPEAK... BODY'S TURNING ICE COLD! I'M TURNING TO STONE JUST LIKE THE OTHERS!



WITHIN TWO WEEKS, THE PLAGUE, RAGING UNCHECKED, HAD SWEEPED ACROSS THE ENTIRE NATION...

IF I DIDN'T KNOW THESE PEOPLE WOULD AWAKEN IN A YEAR, HEALTHIER, HAPPIER, PURGED OF THEIR EVIL THOUGHTS, THESE SCENES WOULD DESTROY ME! I MUST CHECK MY WORK IN ALL PARTS OF THE COUNTRY!



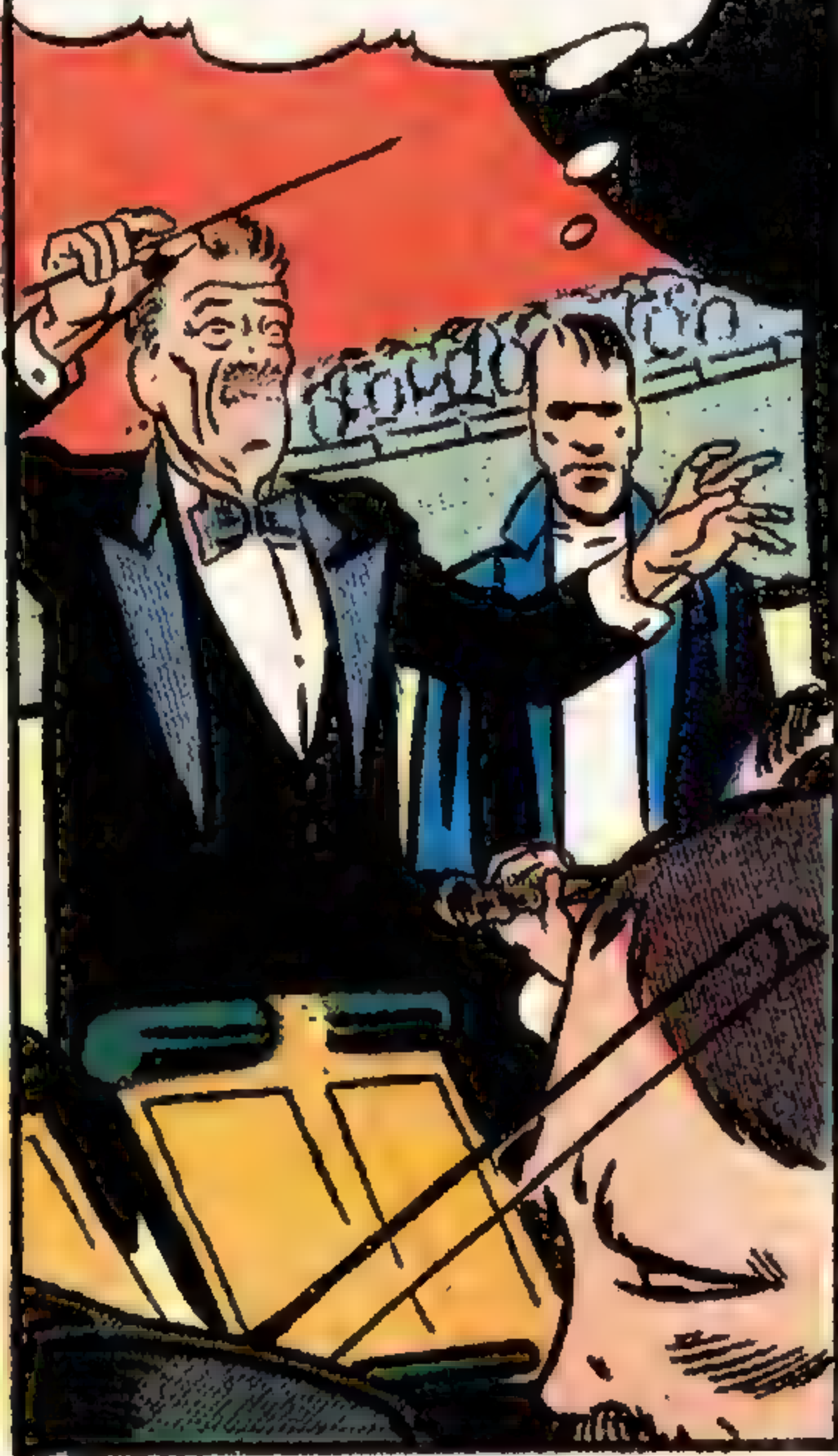
TWENTY THOUSAND FANS NEVER SAW THE COMPLETION OF THE FIFTH AT MIALEAH...

THE CONTAGION CAUGHT INSTANTANEOUSLY! THEY NEVER FELT A MOMENT'S PAIN!



THE FINAL NOTES OF THE SYMPHONY WERE NEVER HEARD!

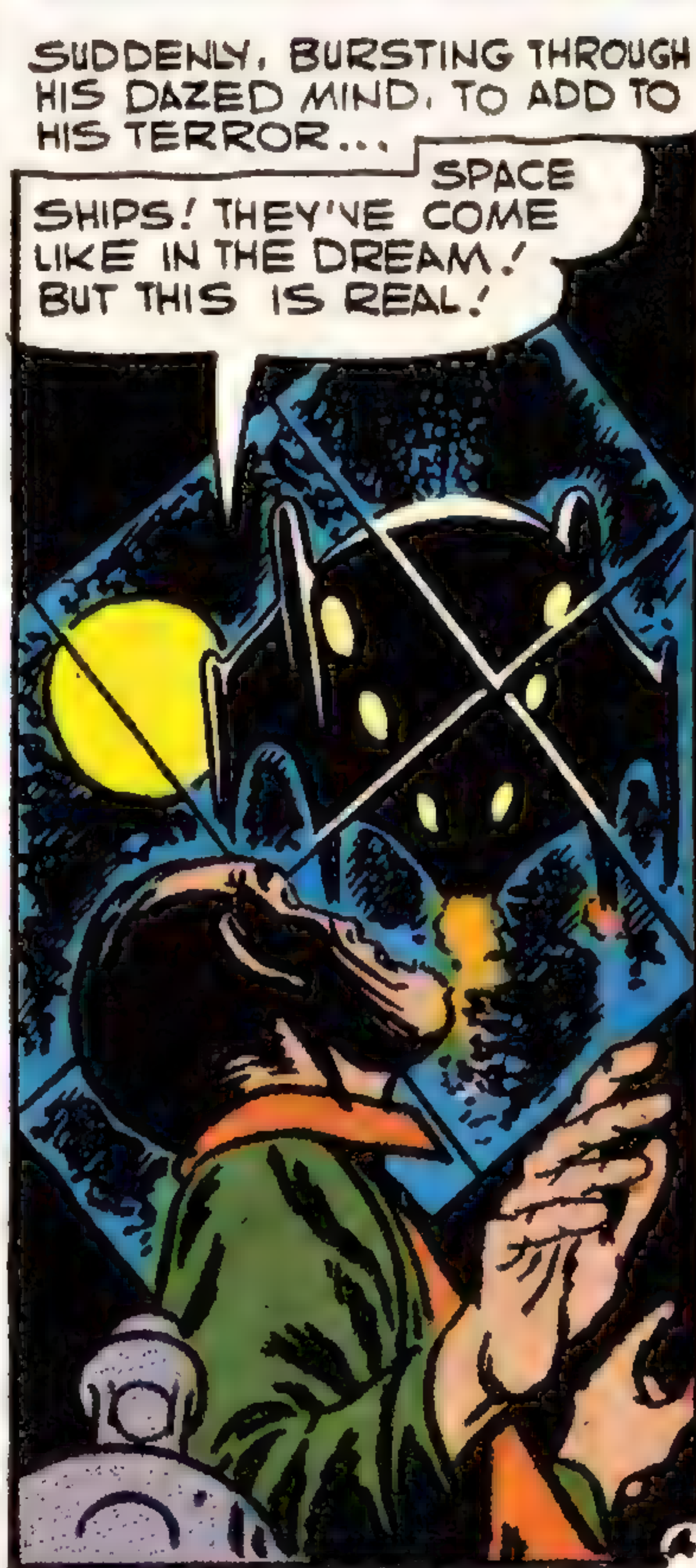
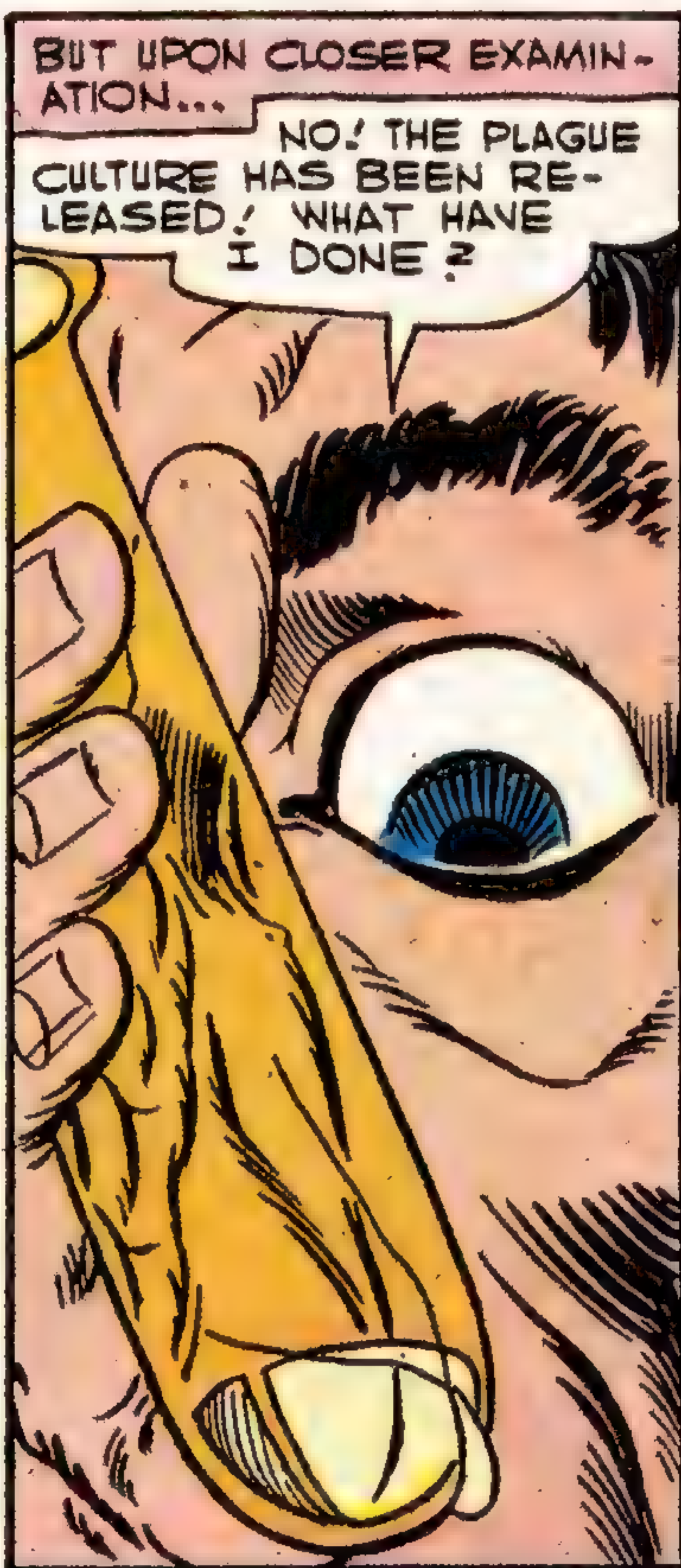
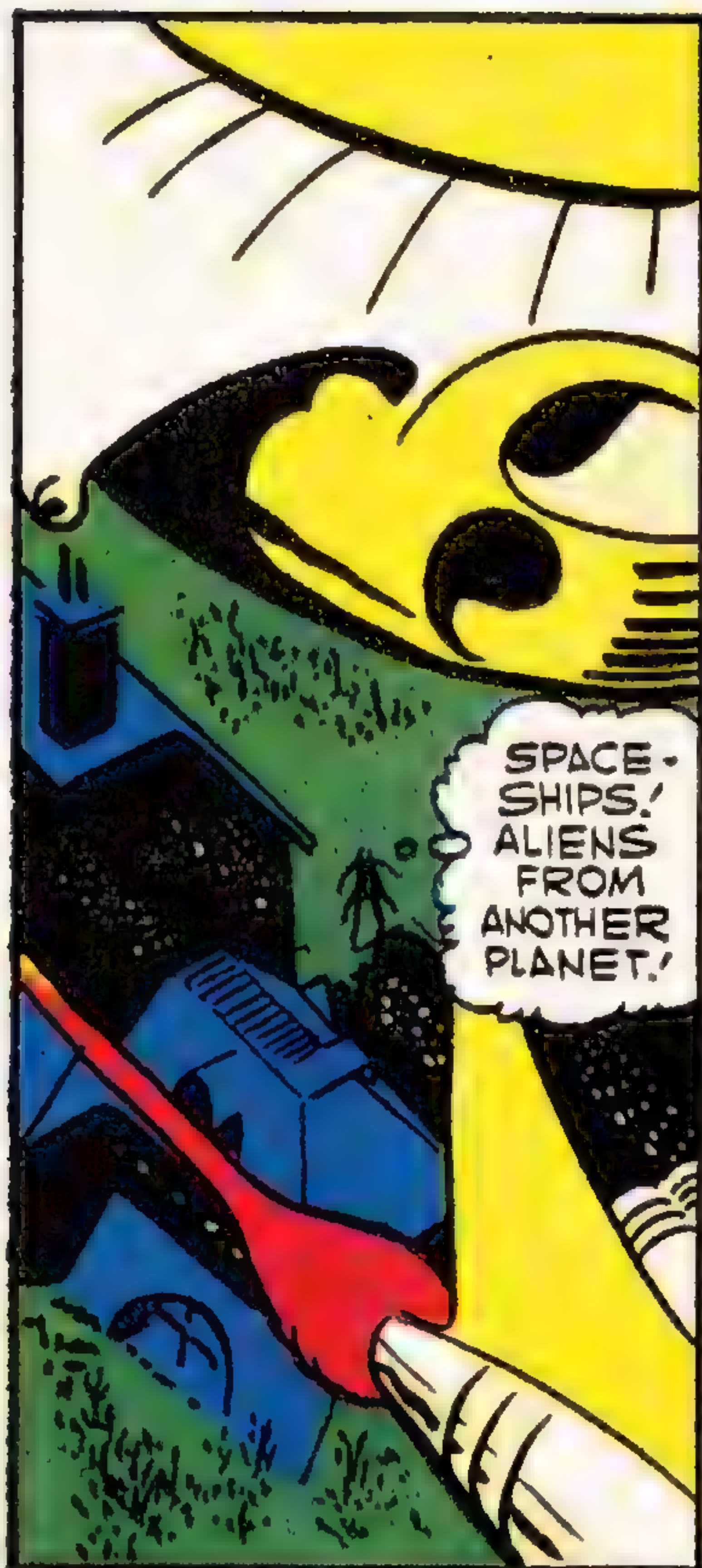
BEETHOVEN WILL BE HEARD AGAIN! AND THEY WILL LISTEN WITH NEW INSIGHT AND APPRECIATE MORE DEEPLY AS A RESULT OF MY PLAGUE!



SATISFIED WITH HIS TOUR OF INSPECTION, HE RETURNED HOME! BUT AS HE APPROACHED HIS LABORATORY...

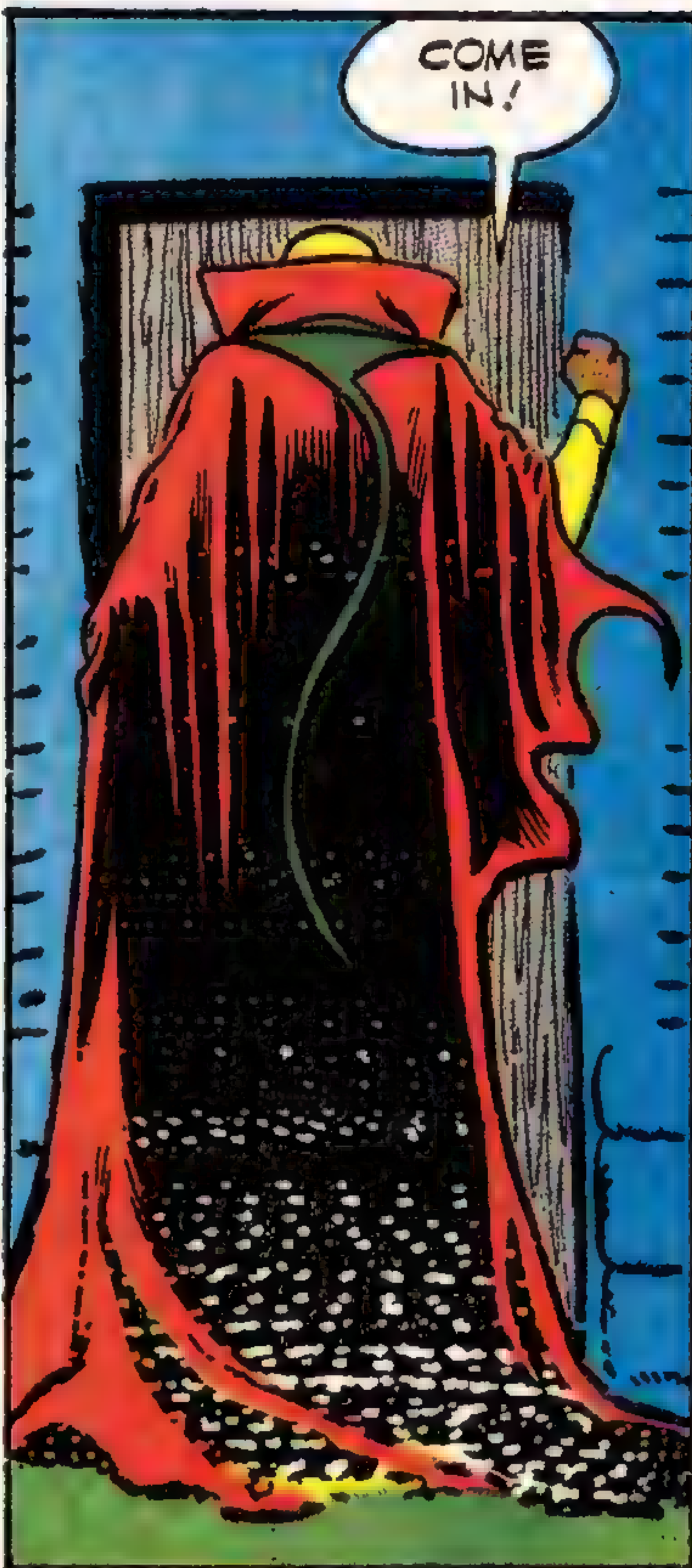
WH... WHAT'S THAT? THE SOUND OF PLANES! NOOO! IT CAN'T BE! THEY'RE...



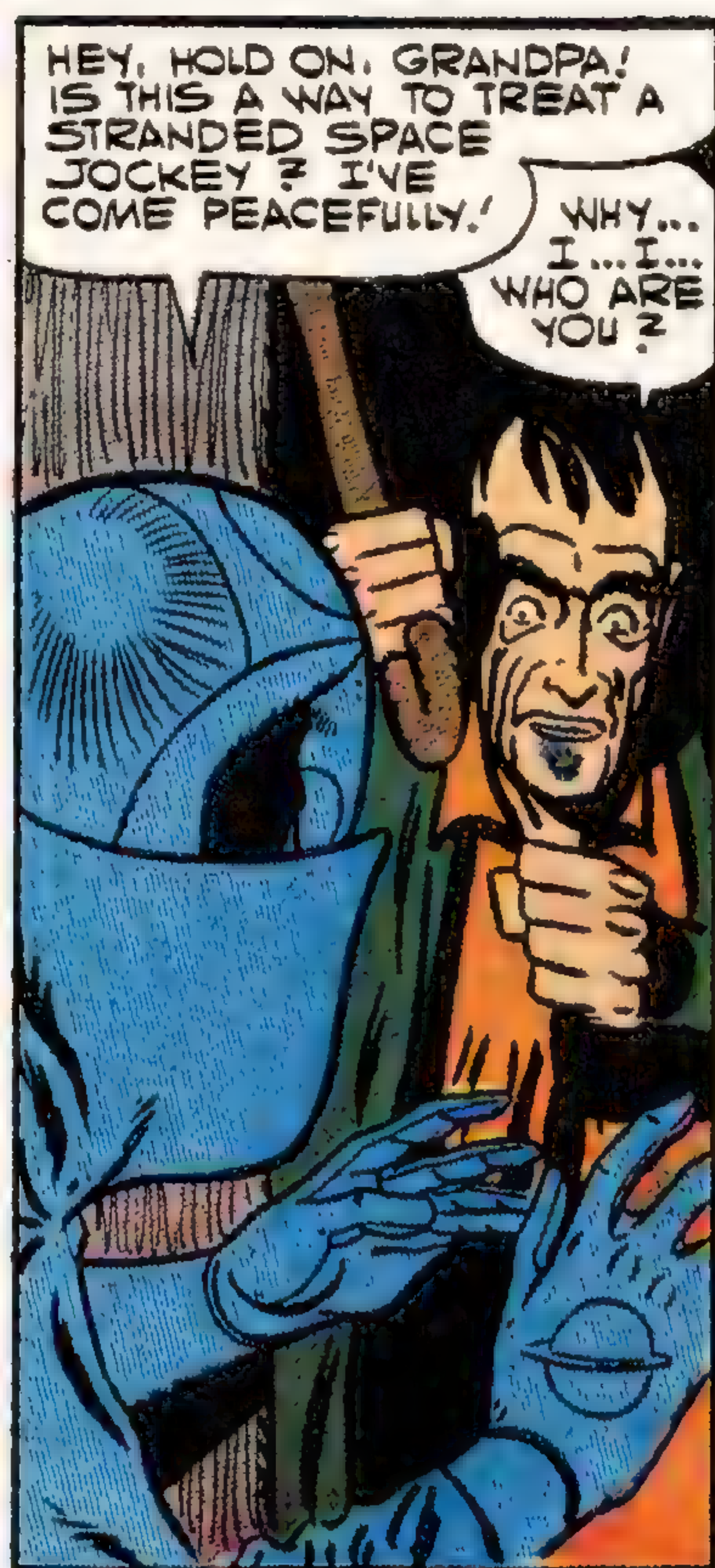




THEY'VE LANDED! SUCH A STRANGE CRAFT! SOON THEY'LL BE COMING FOR ME LIKE IN THE DREAM!



COME IN!



HEY, HOLD ON, GRANDPA! IS THIS A WAY TO TREAT A STRANDED SPACE JOCKEY? I'VE COME PEACEFULLY!

WHY... I... I... WHO ARE YOU?



MARK WILSON, CAPTAIN, EARTH-INTERSTELLAR PATROL! SAY, WHAT'S THIS WEIRD STUFF HERE? LOOKS LIKE AN ANCIENT 20th CENTURY LAB!

WHY...

UH, YES!

I LIKE

ANTIQUES!

EXCUSE ME,

SON, BUT I

LOSE TRACK OF

TIME HERE...

WHAT YEAR

IS IT NOW?



YOU'RE A REAL RIP VAN WINKLE, MISTER! IT'S JUNE 20, 2160, THE 100th YEAR OF WORLD GOVERNMENT! NOW, IF YOU'LL LET ME HAVE SOME WATER FOR MY HYDROVACS, I'LL BE ON MY WAY!

TWO HUNDRED YEARS HAVE PASSED!



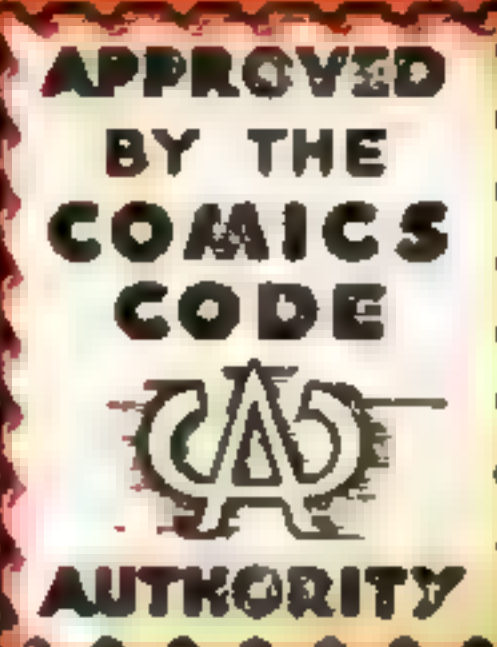
THANK GOODNESS I WAS THE ONLY VICTIM OF THE PLAGUE! ALL THE SPILLED GERMS ENTERED MY BODY, OVERCOMING MY IMMUNITY, AND I ALONE LAY PETRIFIED FOR TWO HUNDRED YEARS! BUT I'VE LIVED TO SEE A NEW PEACEFUL WORLD... ALL HAS COME TO PASS AS I HOPED -- WITHOUT THE PLAGUE!



Tales of the Mysterious Traveler

TALES OF THE

MYSTERIOUS TRAVELER



No 5

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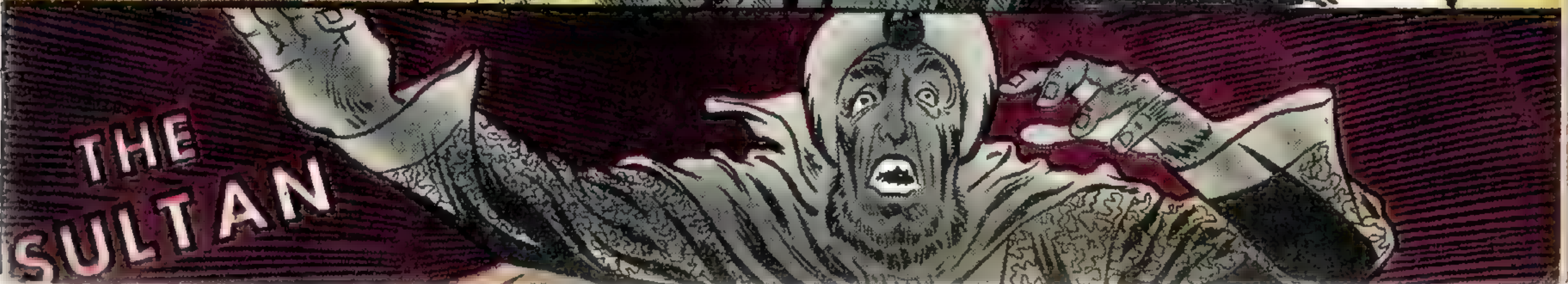
A CHARLTON PUBLICATION



ABOVE THE
TOPMOST
PEAK



THE MAN
BELOW



THE
SULTAN

WHAT? IS NOT THE MANNER
OF MY LIVING LOWLY ENOUGH?



OTHER SULTANS HAVE DESERTS
ABOUNDING IN OIL! OTHER
SULTANS COLLECT ROYALTIES
FROM THE WESTERN POWERS
THAT ENABLE THEM TO LIVE
IN SPLENDOR AS
SULTANS SHOULD!



SORE INDEED IS YOUR PLIGHT,
O GREAT ONE! BUT SUCH
IS THE WILL OF ALLAH...THAT
YOUR DESERTS BE BARREN
EXCEPT FOR SHIFTING
SANDS AND THE BONES
OF THE UNFORTUNATES
WHO TRIED TO CROSS,
AND FAILED!



BAH! THAT IS WHAT THE
WESTERN GEOLOGISTS SAY!
BUT CAN THEY BE TRUSTED?
IF THERE IS ONE
THING I LEARNED...

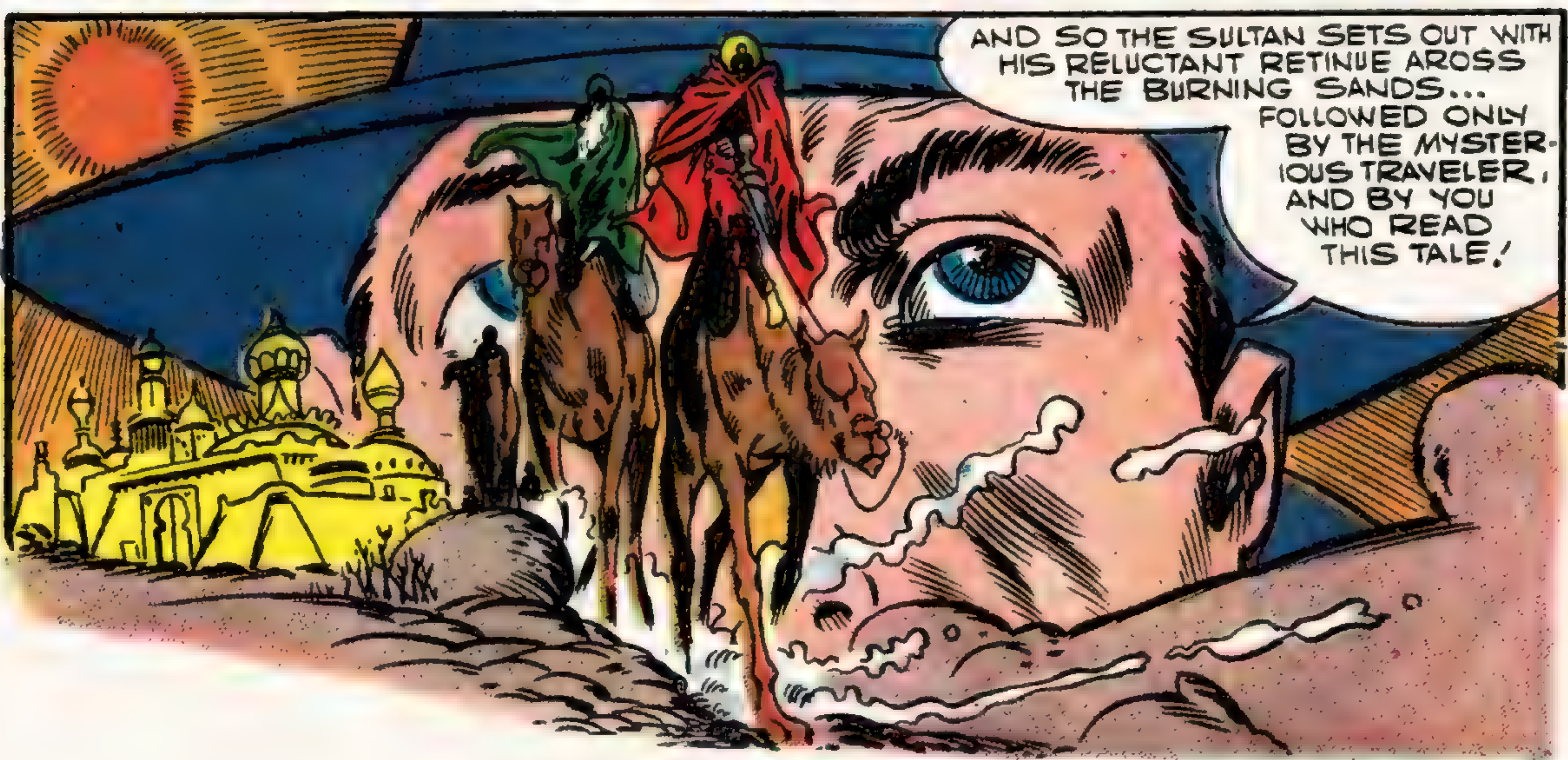


...FROM HOW I BECAME
SULTAN, USING TREACHERY
AND DECEIT ON EVERY
RUNG OF THE LADDER I
CLIMBED TO POWER...

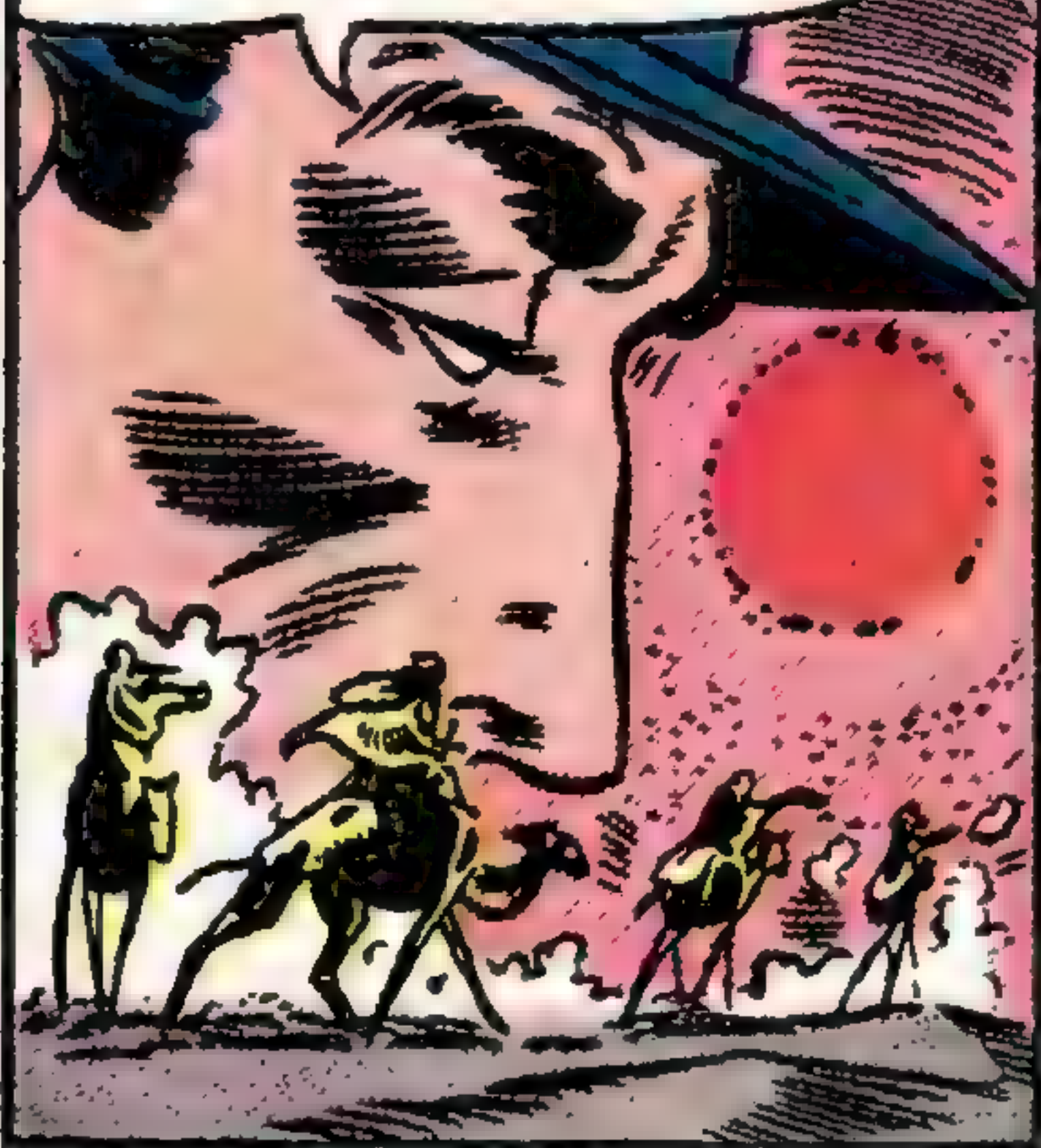


...IT IS THAT NO MAN
CAN BE TRUSTED!





THEY TRAVEL SLOWLY, THE SUN SEARING THEIR OUTER FLESH AND PARCHING THE INSIDES OF THEIR THROATS AT EVERY LABORED STEP OF THE TOTTERING CAMELS...



UNTIL FINALLY...

GREAT ONE, WE ARE ALMOST AT THE POINT OF NO RETURN! WE HAVE ENOUGH WATER AND PROVISIONS TO KEEP US ALIVE ONLY IF WE TURN BACK NOW!



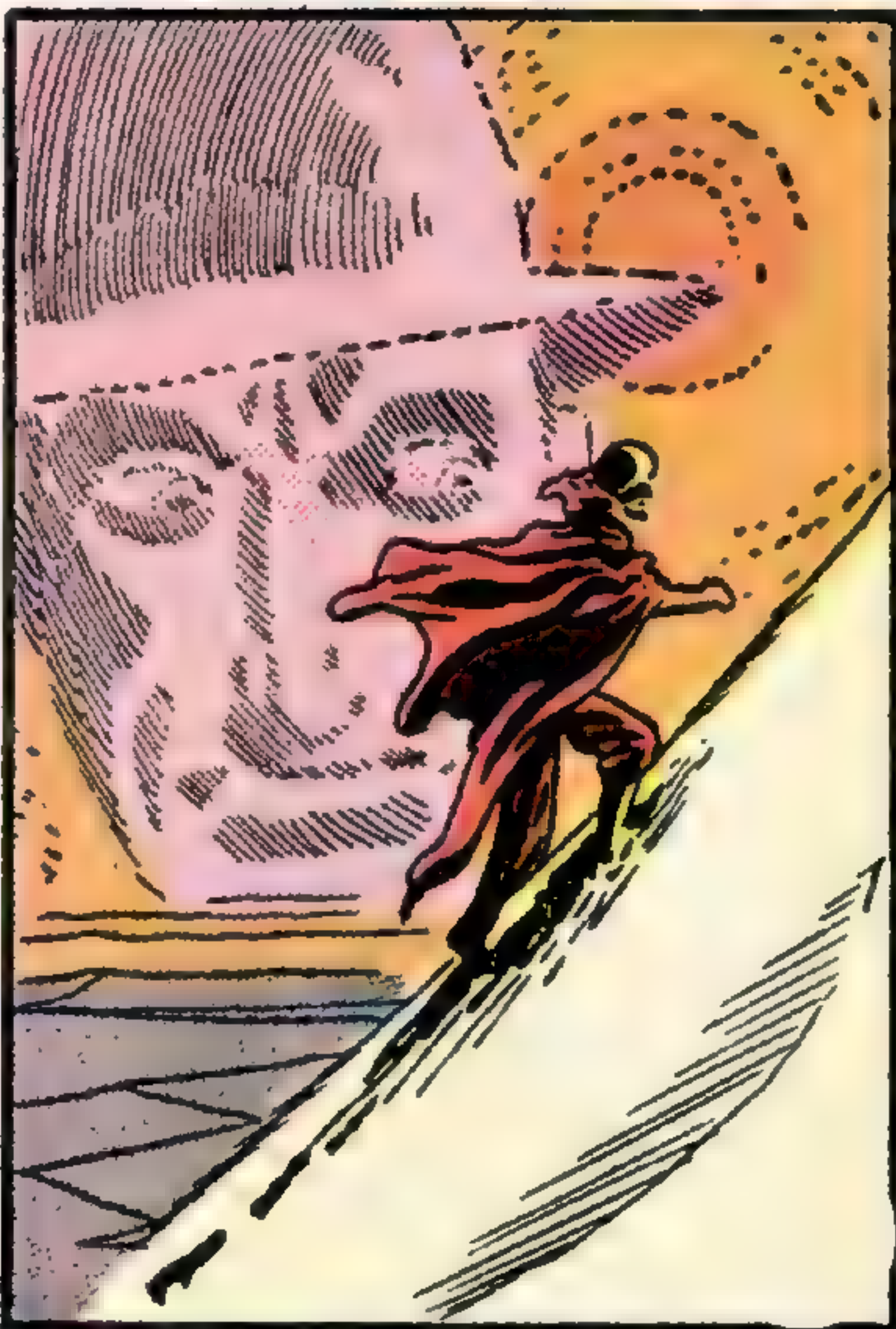
THE DESERT IS EMPTY, GREAT ONE! ALL THESE DAYS WE HAVE SEEN NOTHING BUT SAND AND SUN!

BUT HAVE WE SEEN BEYOND THE NEXT DUNE... AND THE NEXT AFTER THAT?



WE BEG YOU, TURN BACK!

WAIT HERE! LET ME GO ALONE TO THE CREST OF THE NEXT DUNE! IF I SEE NOTHING FROM THERE, WE SHALL RETURN!

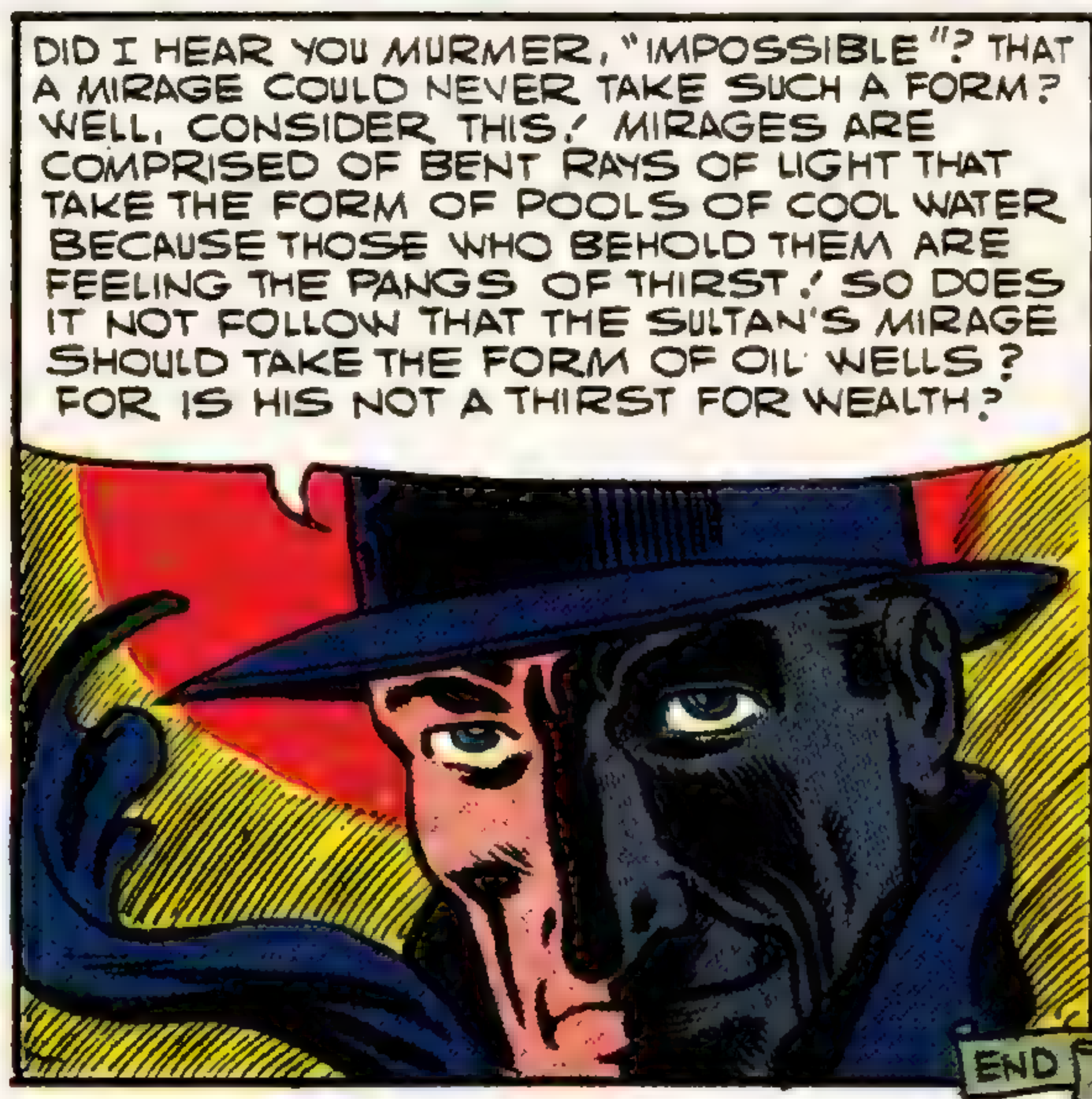
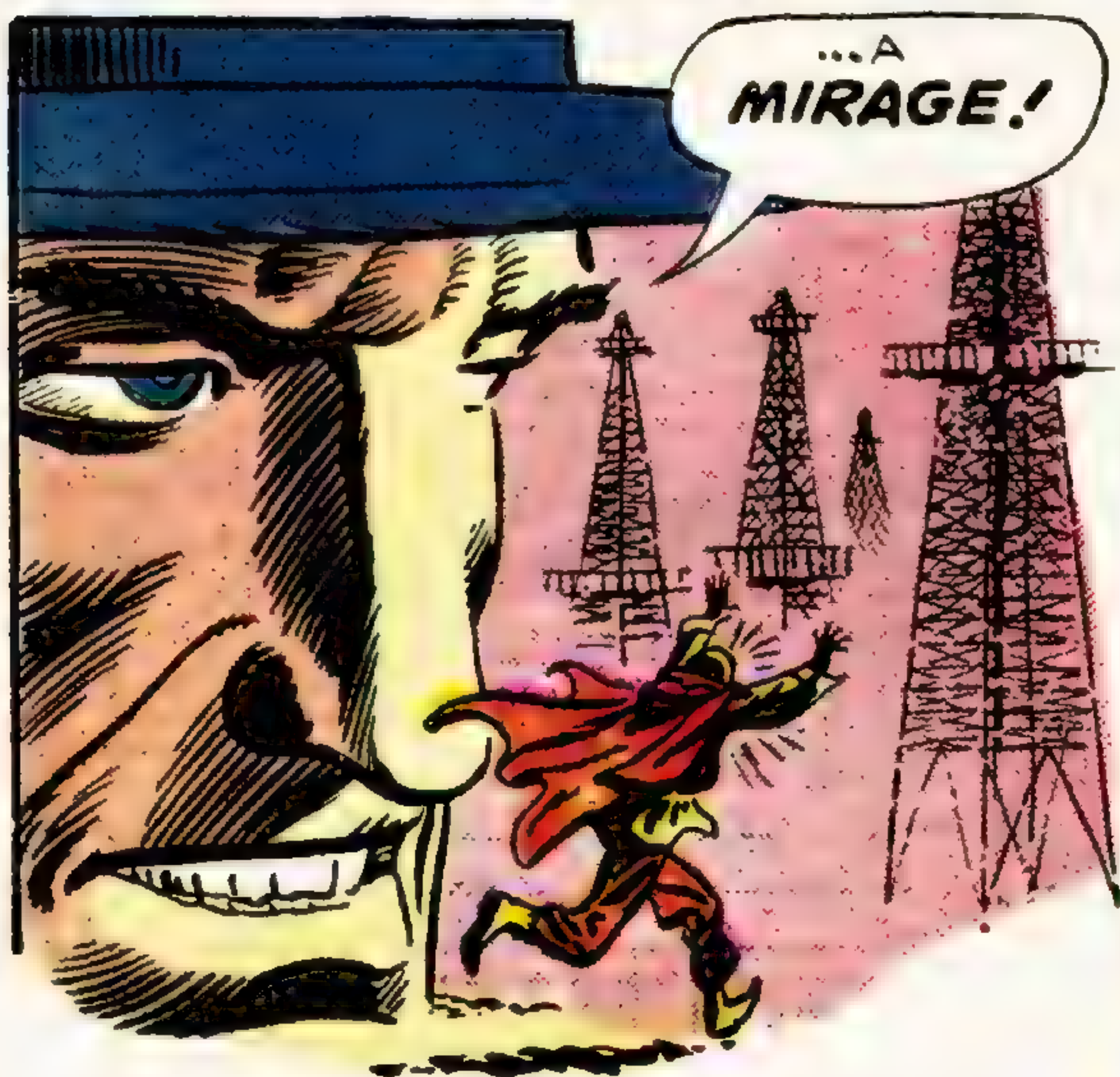


I WAS RIGHT! I WAS RIGHT!



NOW LET US BEHOLD WHAT THE SULTAN BEHOLDS SO GLOATINGLY! WHAT HE SEES... LET US SEE TOO!





ABOVE THE TOPMOST PEAK

THERE IT STANDS, THE WORLD'S TOPMOST PEAK JUTTING SO HIGH ABOVE THE PLAINS BELOW THAT ITS CROWN IS ALWAYS ENVELOPED BY AN ENORMOUS CLOUD! AND SINCE ALL THOSE WHO HAVE TRIED TO SCALE ITS DIZZYING HEIGHTS HAVE NEVER BEEN SEEN AGAIN... THAT WHICH LURKS ABOVE THE TOPMOST PEAK HAS REMAINED A DREAD MYSTERY!

AND YET TODAY STILL ANOTHER CLIMBER VENTURES UP TOWARD THE UNKNOWN! FOR THAT WHICH DISTINGUISHES MEN FROM ANIMALS IS THEIR UNDAUNTED RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGE OF THE UNKNOWN... THEIR NEED TO REACH AND GRASP THE UNATTAINABLE, DESPITE THE COST!

SHALL HE TOO DISAPPEAR INSIDE THE BILLINGWING MASSIVE CLOUD... NEVER TO BE SEEN AGAIN?

Ditko

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HE CLIMBS HIGHER... HIGHER... STRENUOUSLY INCHING HIS WAY UP ROCK WALLS THAT ARE SHEER VERTICALS!



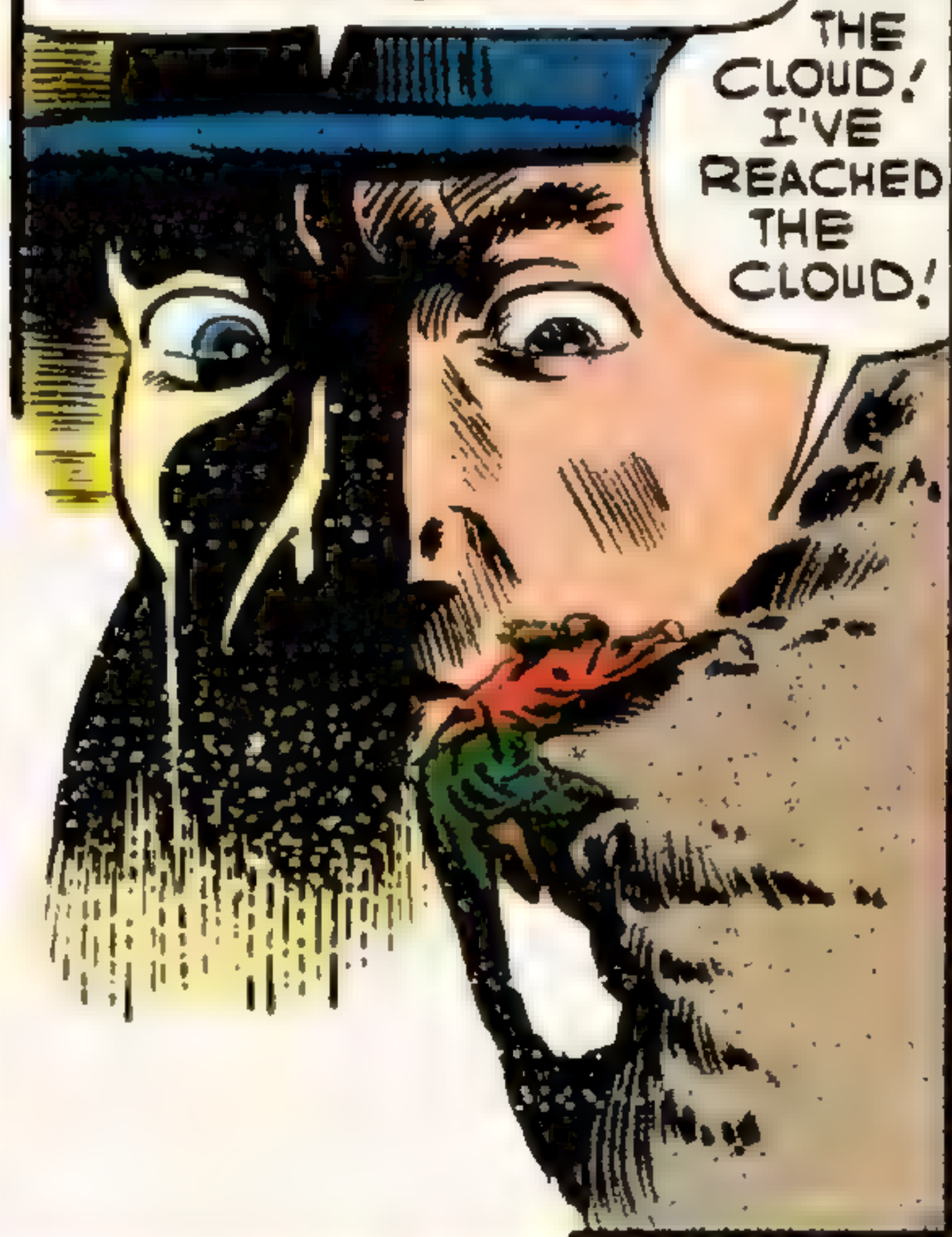
... ALWAYS CAREFUL TO KEEP HIS EYES AVERTED FROM WHAT AWAITS HIM BELOW IF HE SHOULD FALL!



HIGHER... HIGHER... HIS BREATH IS LABORED NOW, EACH GULP OF RARIFIED AIR TAKING A TERRIBLE TOLL ON HIS THROBBING LUNGS!



SUDDENLY, THE AIR IS BLANKETED WITH A HEAVY MIST!



THE CLOUD! I'VE REACHED THE CLOUD!

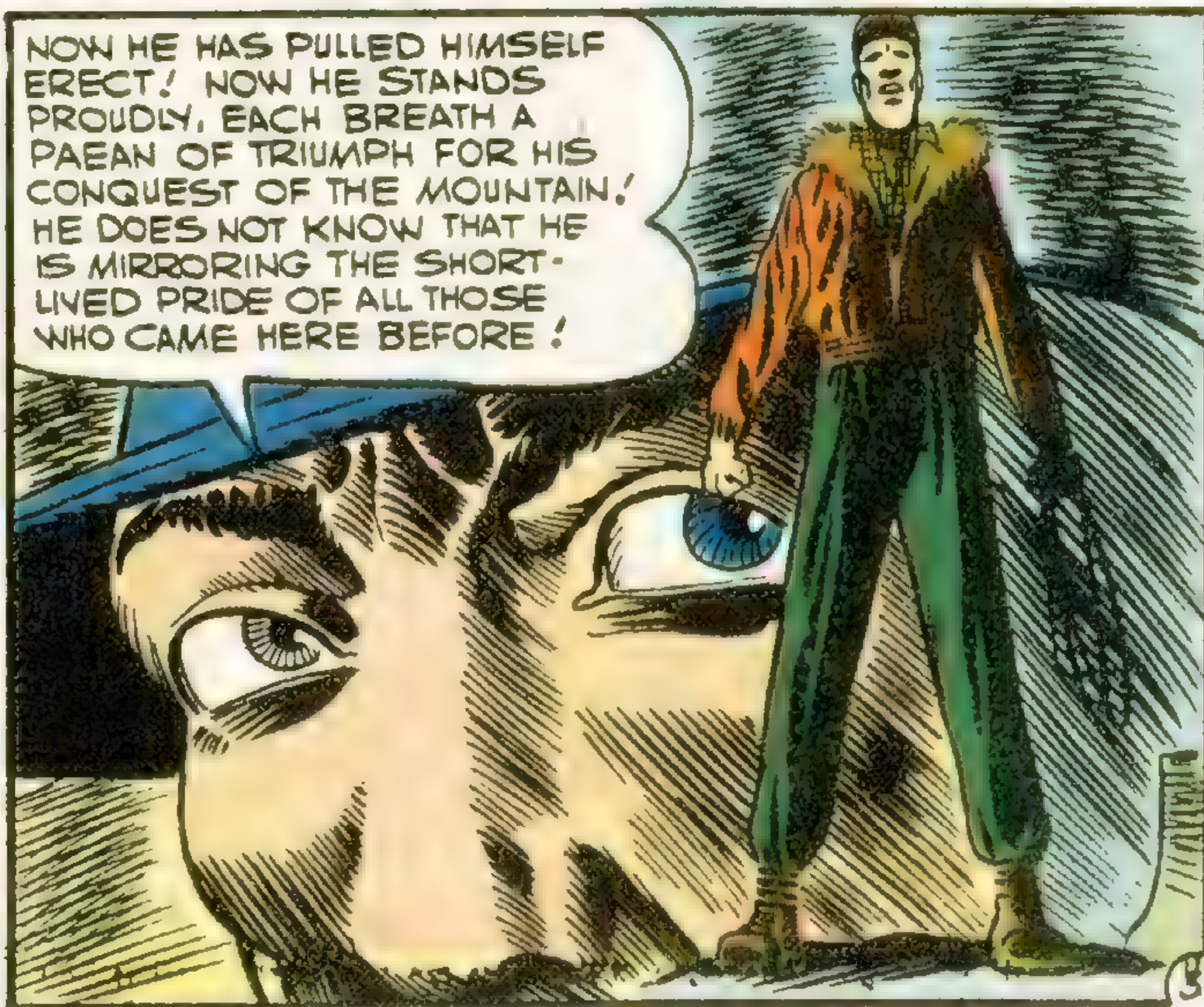
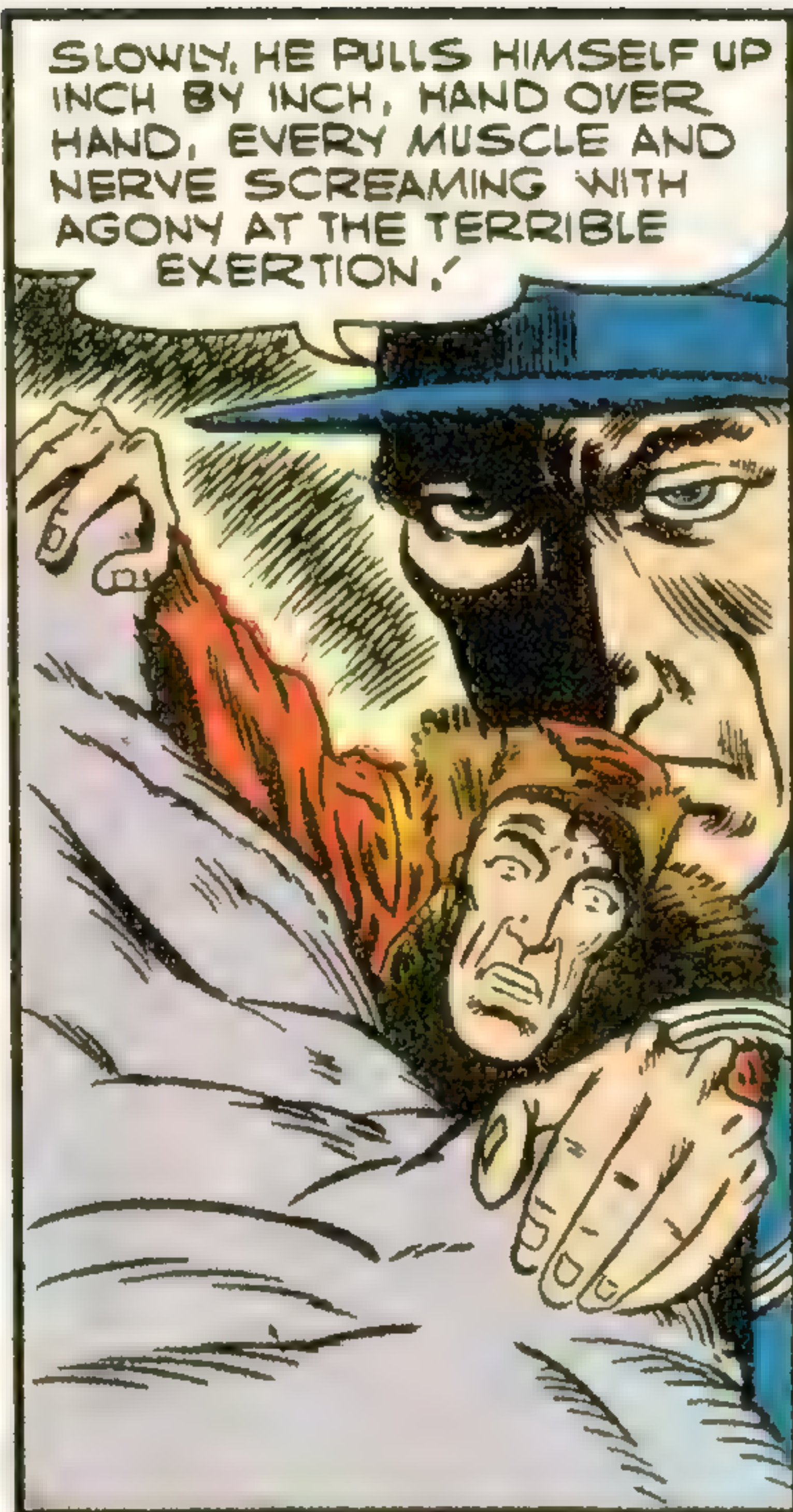


I'M ALMOST AT THE TOP! JUST A FEW HUNDRED FEET TO GO!

BUT THEN ...



A CREVASSE! I DIDN'T SEE IT BECAUSE OF THE CLOUD!



SHORT-LIVED... BECAUSE NOW ONE OF THE INNER FOLDS OF THE MAMMOTH CLOUD SLOWLY MOVES ASIDE! AND HE SEES WHAT HAS ALWAYS AWAITED ABOVE THE WORLD'S TOPMOST PEAK!

OH (GROAN) NO!

ANOTHER MOUNTAIN! TEN TIMES HIGHER THAN THE ONE HE JUST BARELY CLIMBED! SO HIGH... IT COULD NEVER BE CLIMBED BY ANY MAN!

HOW PUNY HE FEELS NOW! HOW TINY AND ANTLIKE IN THE PRESENCE OF NATURE AT ITS MOST AWESOME! HOW FUTILE...

WHAT SHOULD I DO? WHAT SHOULD I DO?

AS HE DESCENDS, HE KEEPS MAKING OVER AND OVER THE SAME VOW OF SILENCE MADE BY THE OTHERS WHO HAD CLIMBED TO THE PEAK BEFORE HIM... AND HAD BEEN HUMBLLED BY WHAT AWAITED ON TOP!

SOB!

I'LL NEVER TELL WHAT'S ON TOP! IT WOULD ONLY CRUSH MEN'S SPIRIT TO KNOW THERE'S A MOUNTAIN THAT CAN'T BE CLIMBED! I'LL ASSUME A NEW IDENTITY... LET PEOPLE THINK I DISAPPEARED... TO MAKE SURE NO ONE CAN EVER WORM THE SECRET OUT OF ME!

END



**MYSTERIOUS
TRAVELER**

THE MAN BELOW

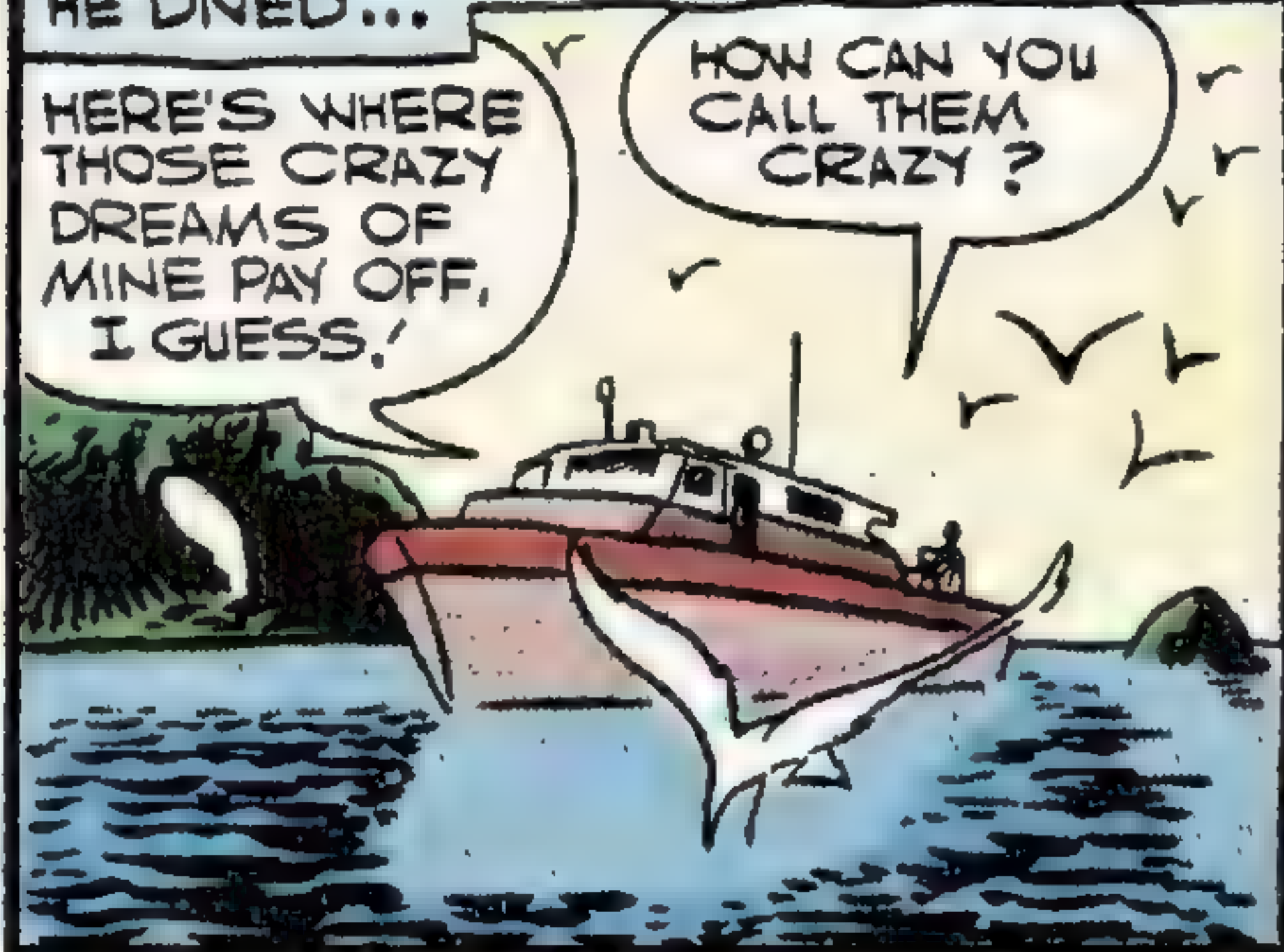
NO PLACE ON EARTH IS UNKNOWN TO THE **MYSTERIOUS TRAVELER**... NEITHER THE UPPERMOST REACHES OF TOWERING MOUNTAINS ... NOR THE NETHERMOST SUBAQUEOUS DEPTHS!



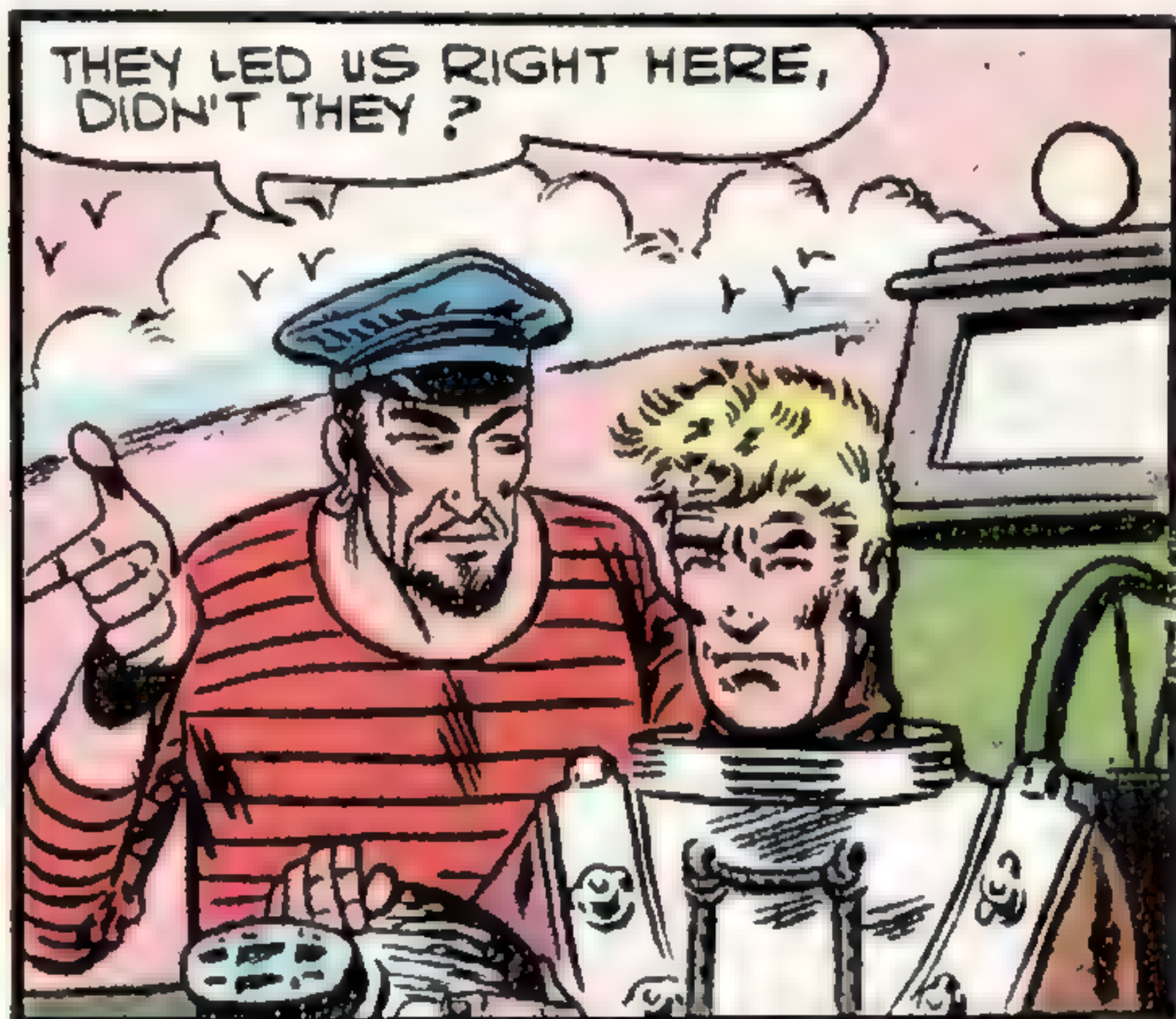
AND I WAS ON THE LAUNCH BEFORE HE DIVED ...

HERE'S WHERE THOSE CRAZY DREAMS OF MINE PAY OFF, I GUESS!

HOW CAN YOU CALL THEM CRAZY?



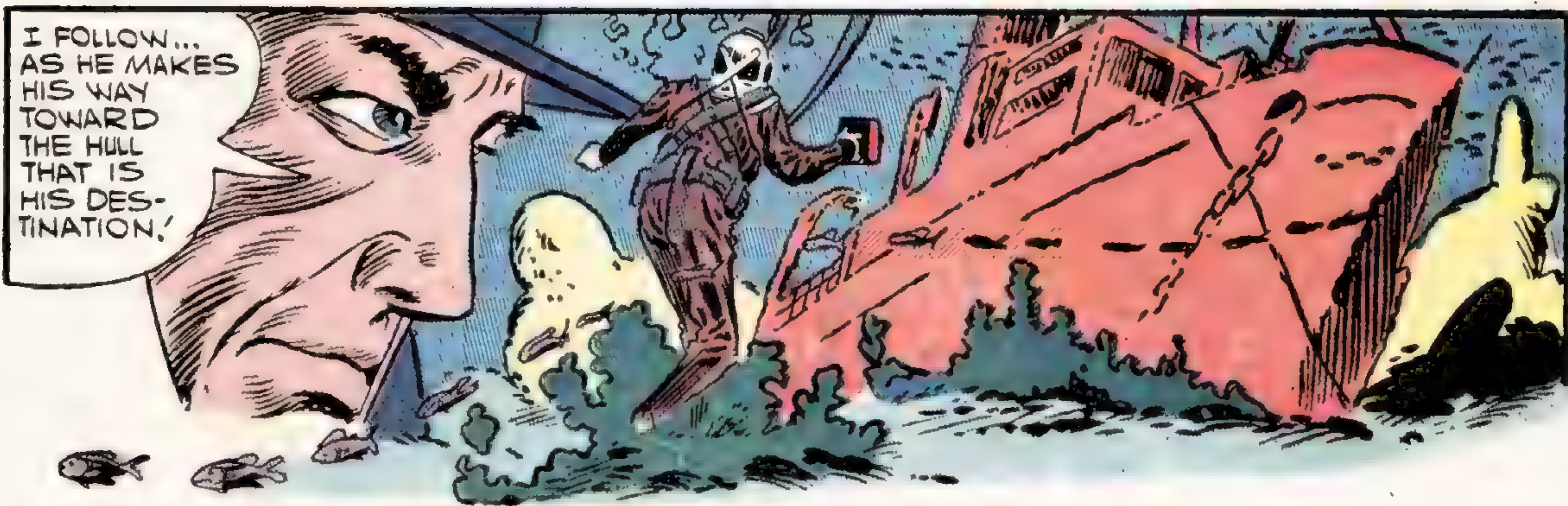
THEY LED US RIGHT HERE, DIDN'T THEY?



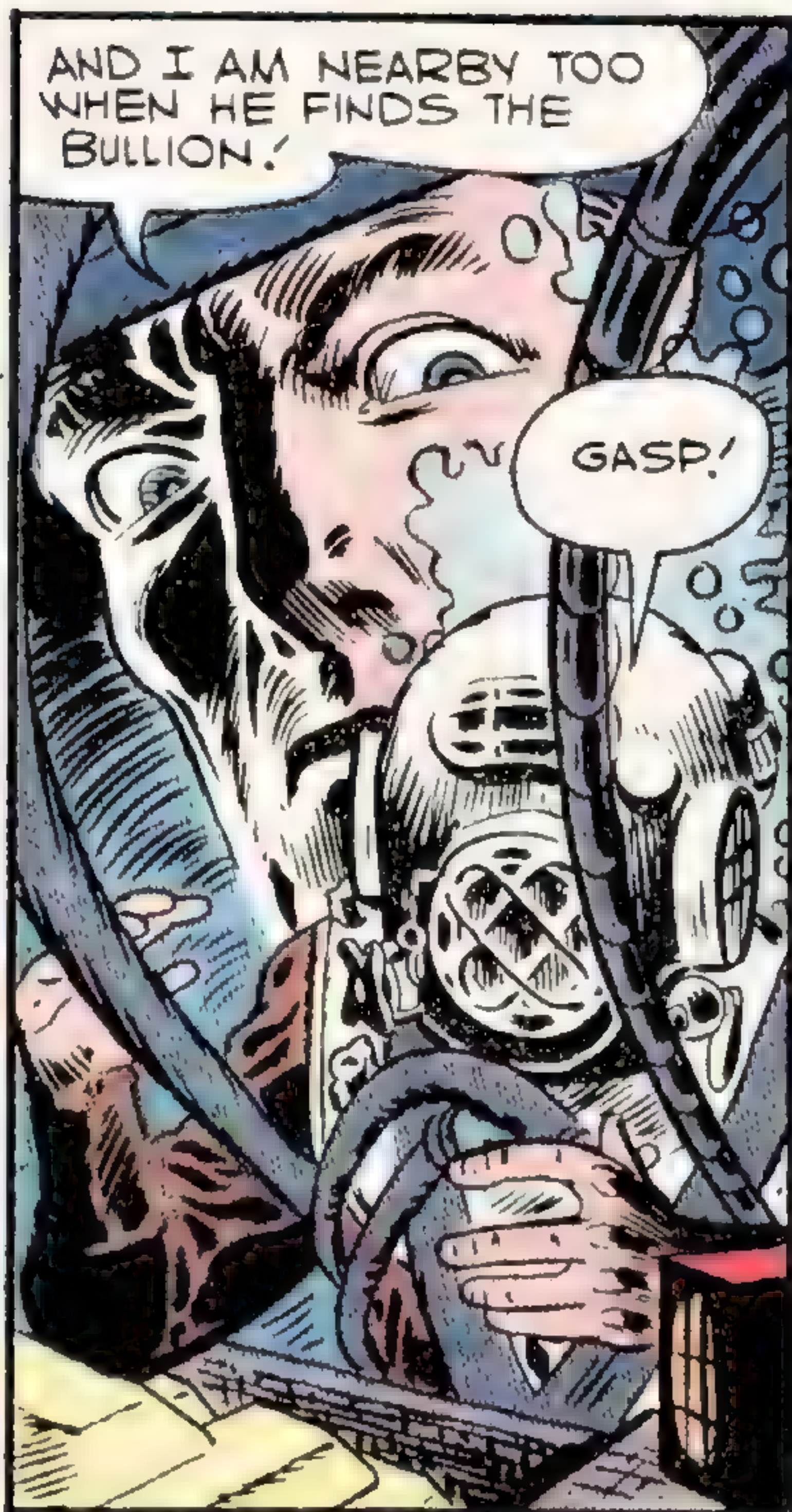
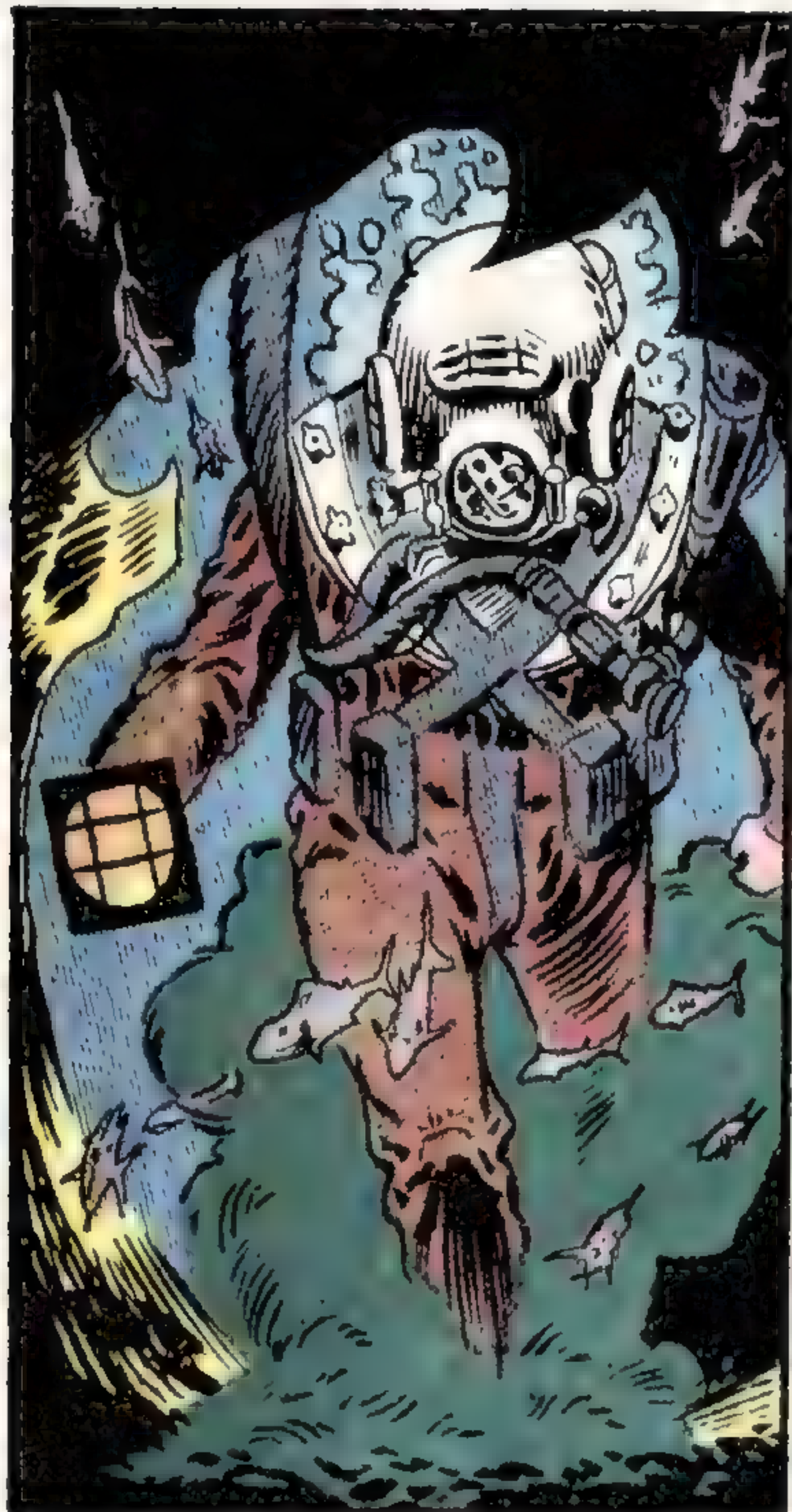
EVERY LANDMARK YOU DREAMED ABOUT SHOWED UP RIGHT ON SCHEDULE ... ONE AFTER THE OTHER!







I FOLLOW...
AS HE MAKES
HIS WAY
TOWARD
THE HULL
THAT IS
HIS DES-
TINATION!

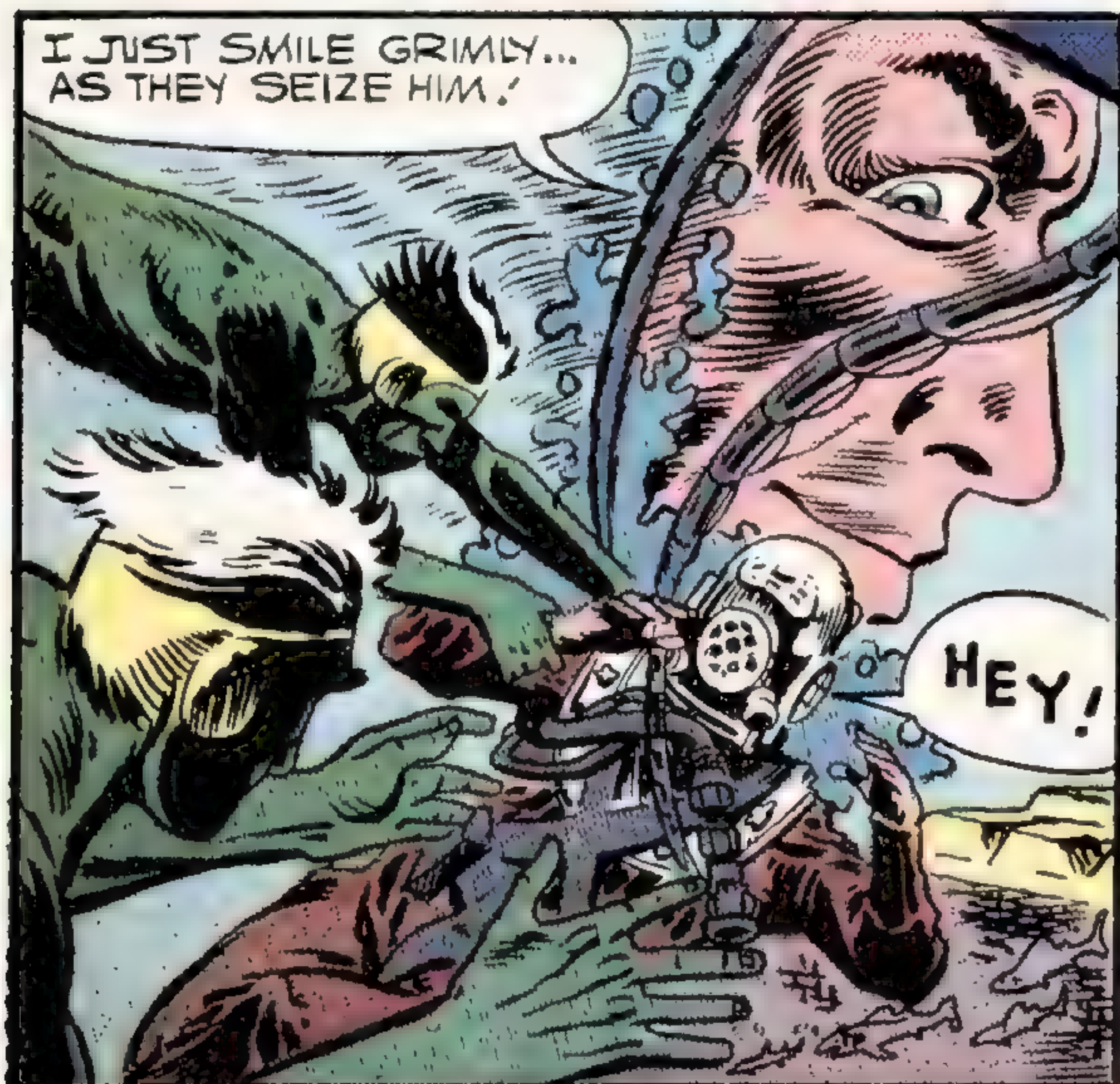


AND I AM NEARBY TOO
WHEN HE FINDS THE
BULLION!

GASP!

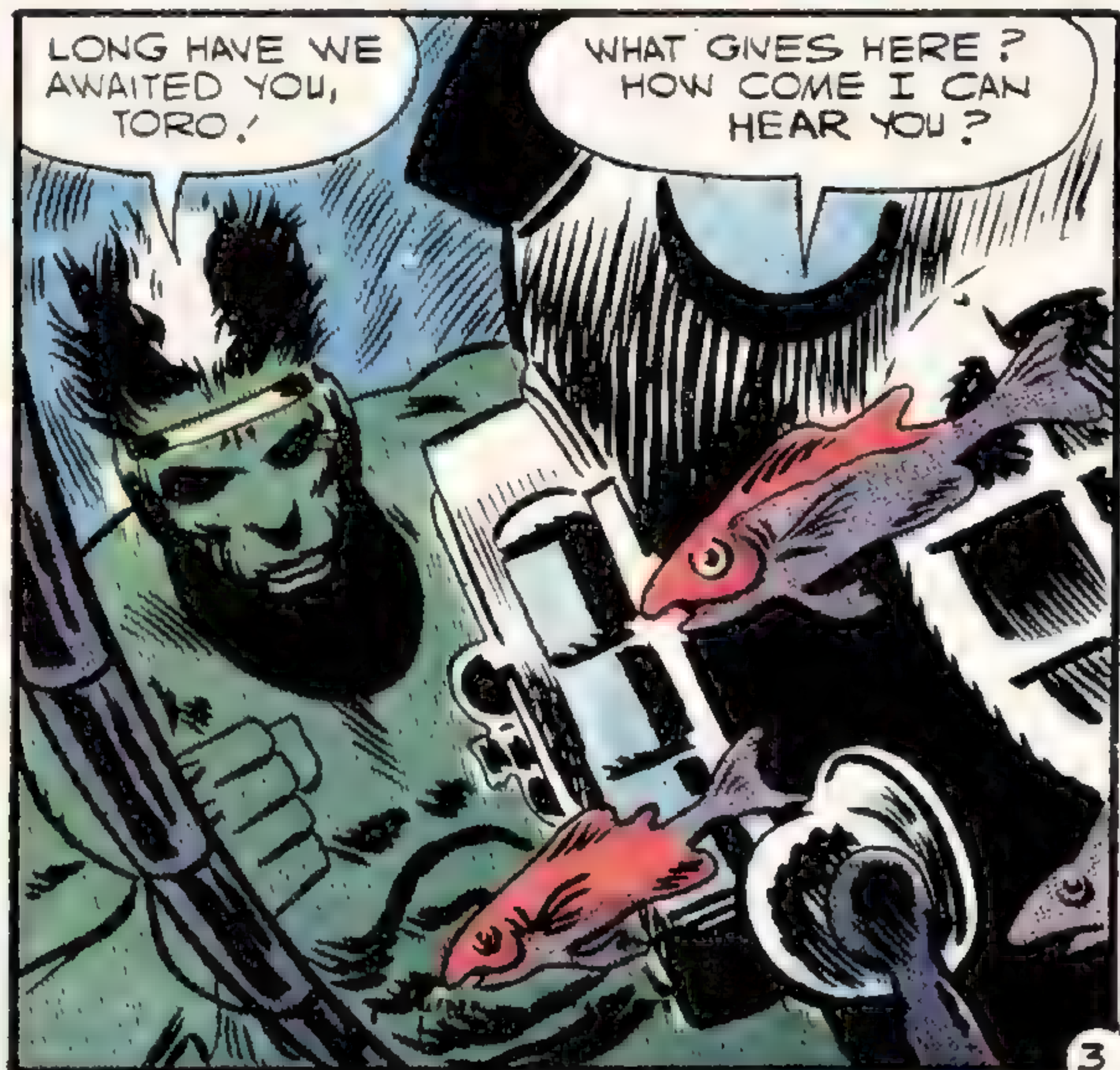


I SEE THE FISH-MEN STEALTH-
ILY APPROACH! I AM EM-
POWERED TO WARN THEIR
UNSUSPECTING QUARRY...
BUT I GIVE NO WARNING!



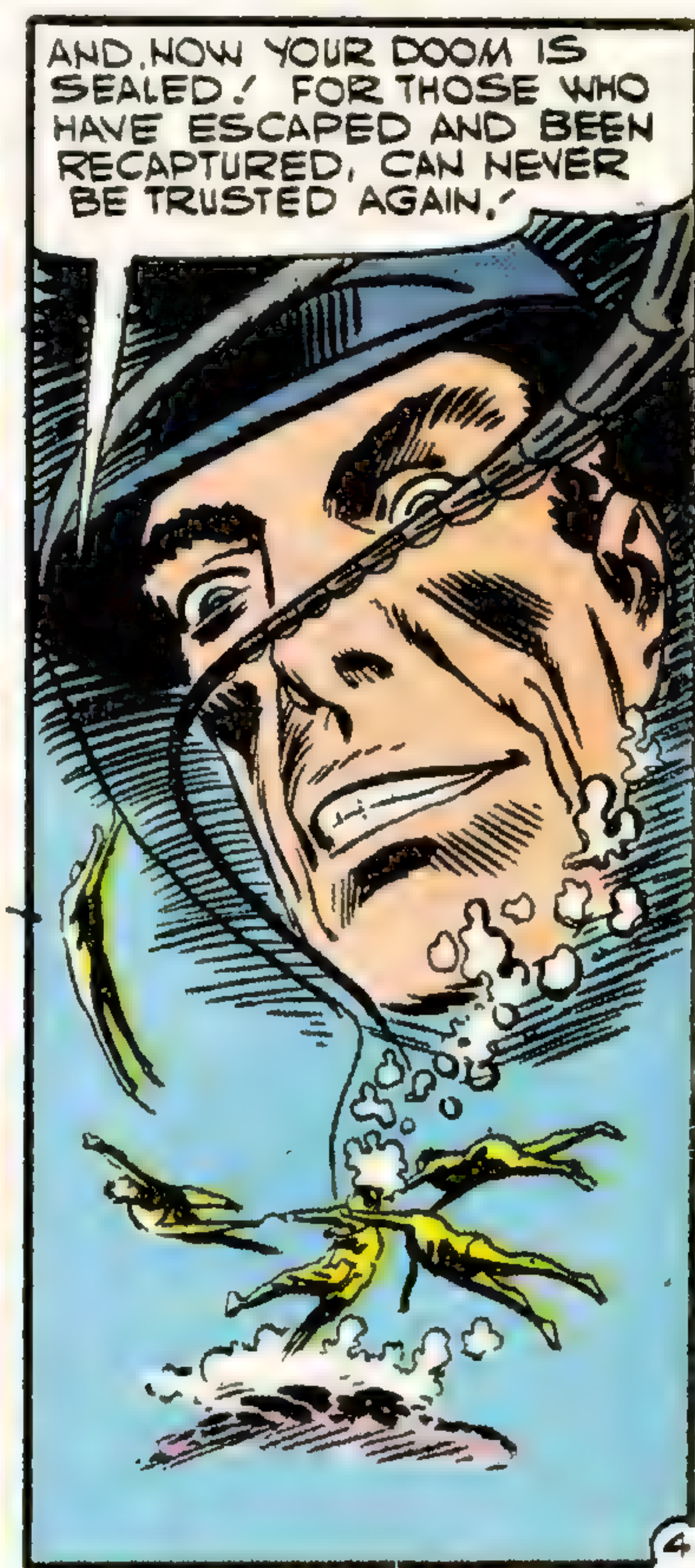
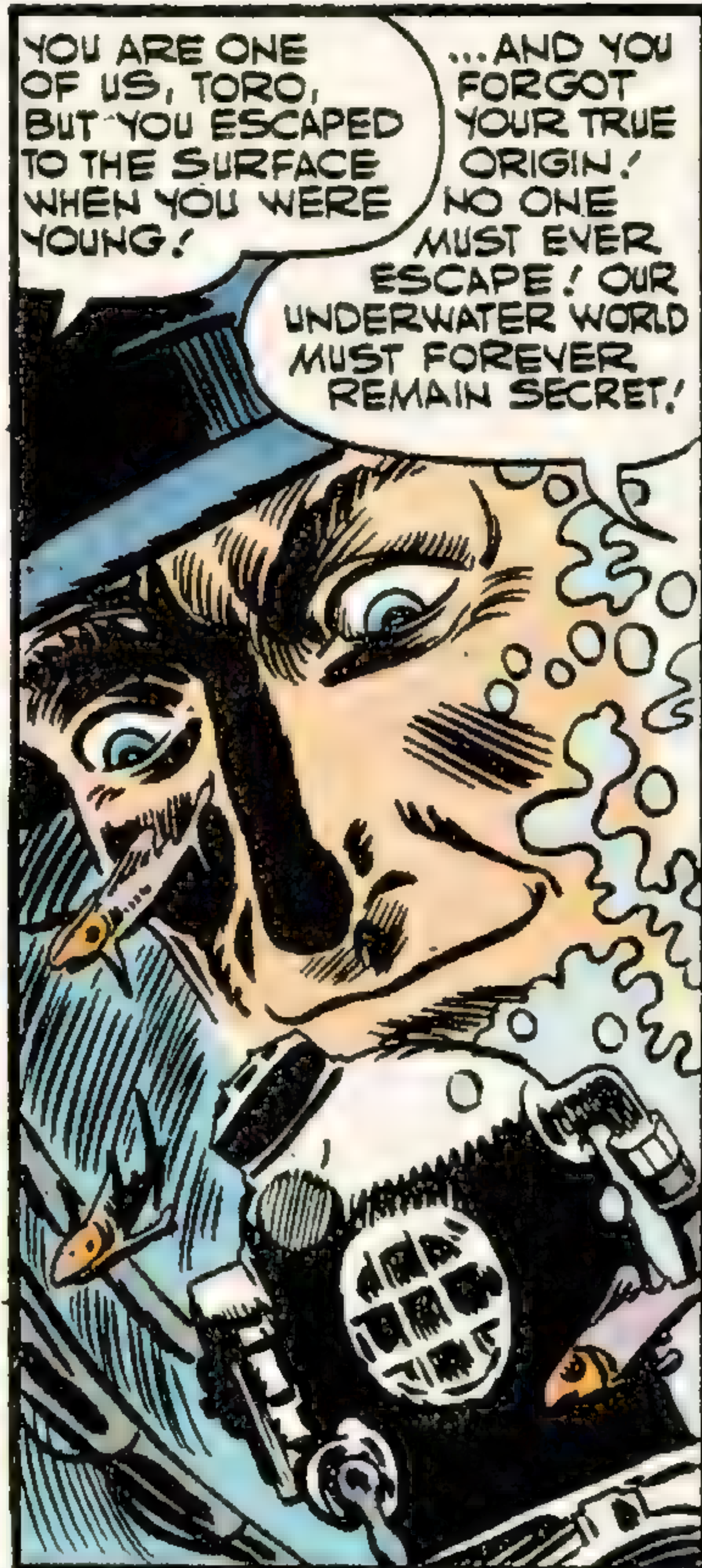
I JUST SMILE GRIMLY...
AS THEY SEIZE HIM!

HEY!



LONG HAVE WE
AWAITED YOU,
TORO!

WHAT GIVES HERE?
HOW COME I CAN
HEAR YOU?





CUSTOM PEDDLER EZRA BENTON WAS UNPREPARED FOR THE FREAK SNOWSTORM IN MID-APRIL. BUT HE WAS EVEN LESS PREPARED FOR...

The ELIXIR

BRRR, CAN'T STAY IN THAT STALLED CAR! I'LL FREEZE THERE! GOT TO FIND SOME SHELTER OR KEEP MOVING! THIS HAD TO HAPPEN TO ME! CAN JUST IMAGINE WHAT MY STEP-SISTER, CORA, WOULD SAY!

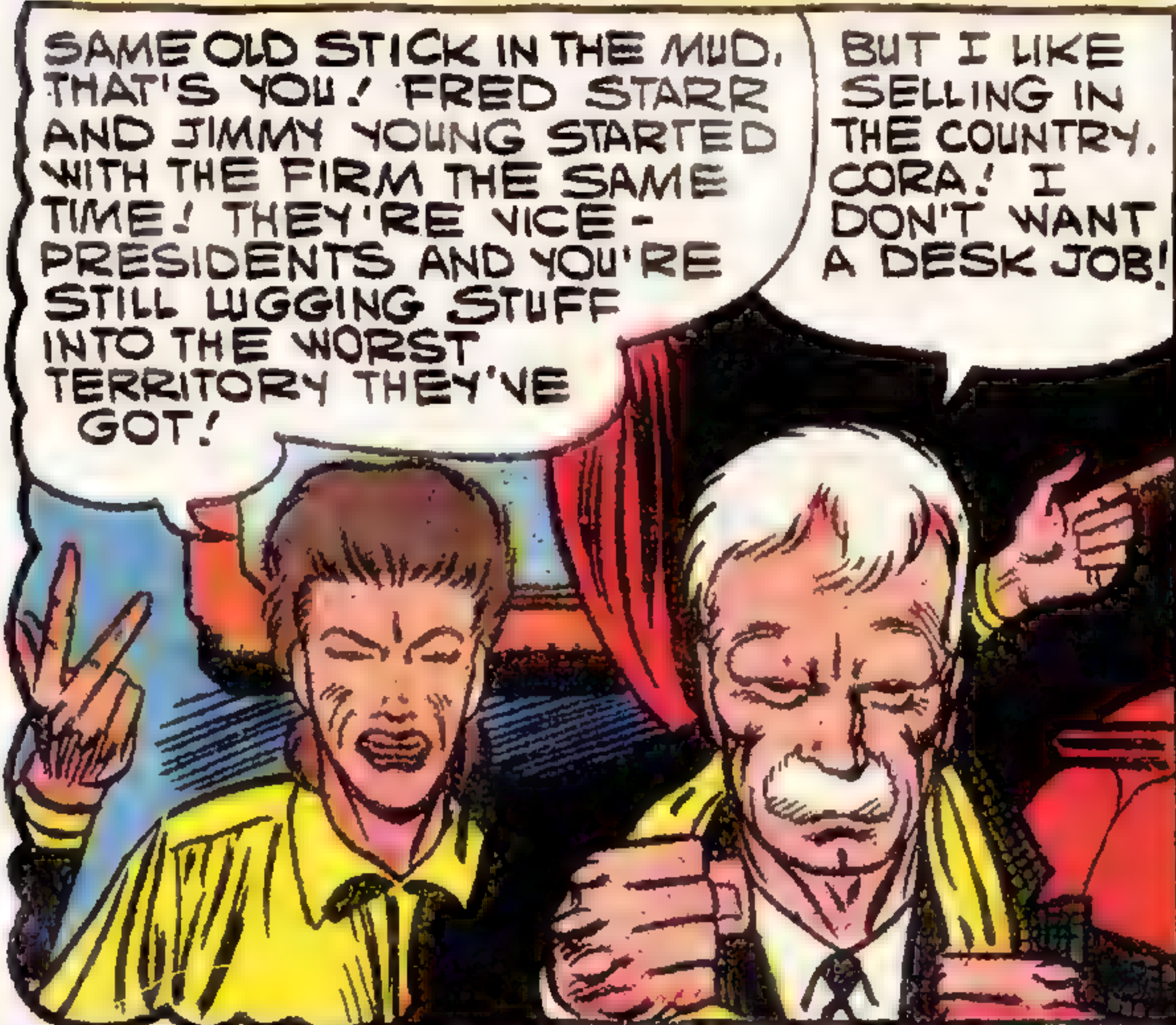


Steve Dithko

S2243

AND HE REMEMBERED WHAT CORA HAD SAID BEFORE HE'D LEFT FOR MICHIGAN...

IT WENT ON AND ON -- AND ON...



SAME OLD STICK IN THE MUD, THAT'S YOU! FRED STARR AND JIMMY YOUNG STARTED WITH THE FIRM THE SAME TIME! THEY'RE VICE-PRESIDENTS AND YOU'RE STILL DIGGING STUFF INTO THE WORST TERRITORY THEY'VE GOT!

BUT I LIKE SELLING IN THE COUNTRY, CORA! I DON'T WANT A DESK JOB!



SURE, I GOT TO WORRY ABOUT THE BILLS EVERY MONTH! I NEVER GET OUT OR BUY NEW CLOTHES JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE CONTENT WITH YOUR MISERABLE JOB!

ALL RIGHT, CORA! SOME DAY YOU'LL HAVE ALL THE THINGS YOU WANT... BELIEVE ME!

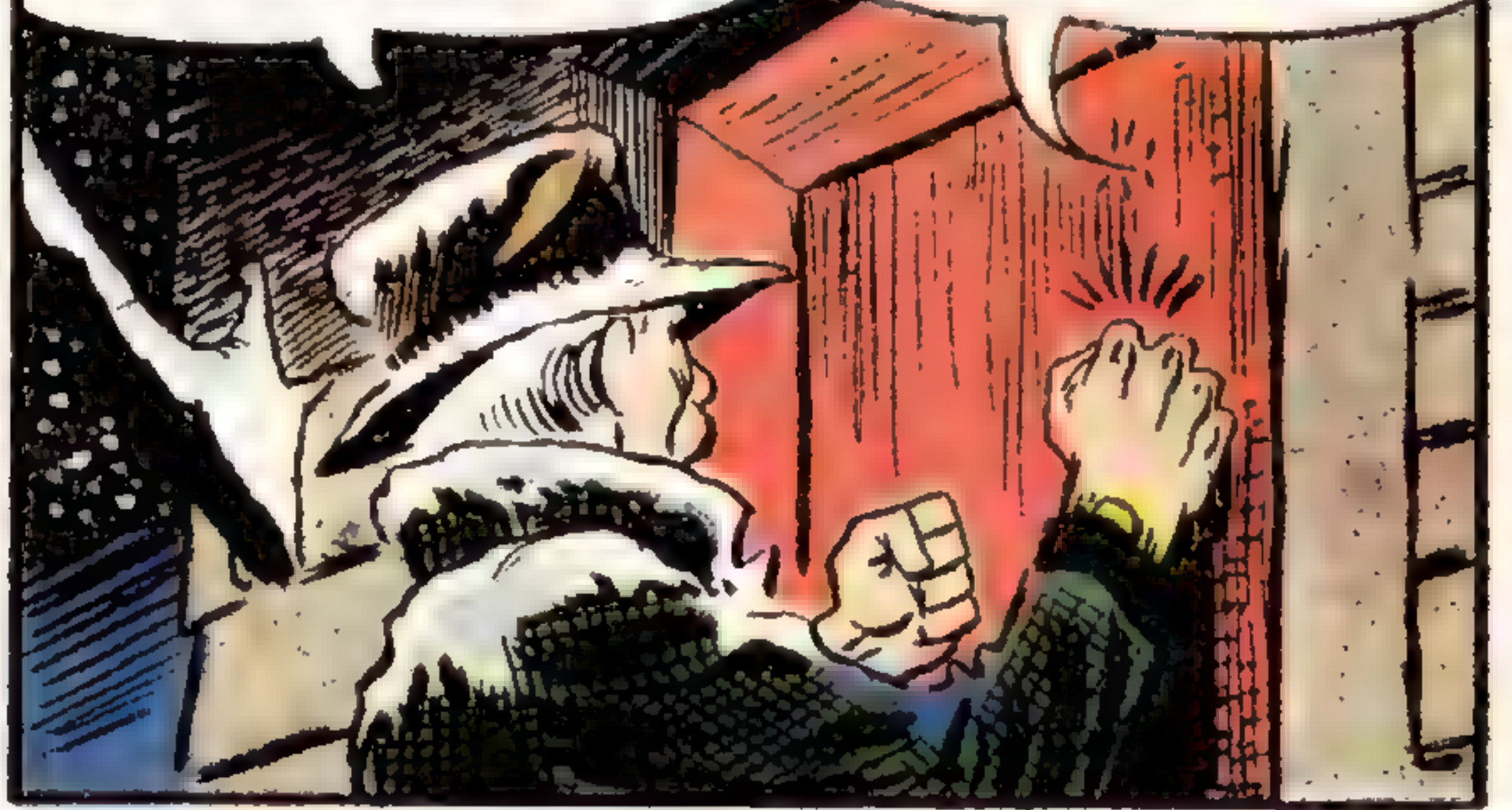
HOURS PASSED AND HE HAD ALMOST RE-SIGNED HIMSELF TO CERTAIN DANGER WHEN...

GASP... A LIGHT! THANK HEAVENS, A LIGHT AT LAST! I'M SAVED!



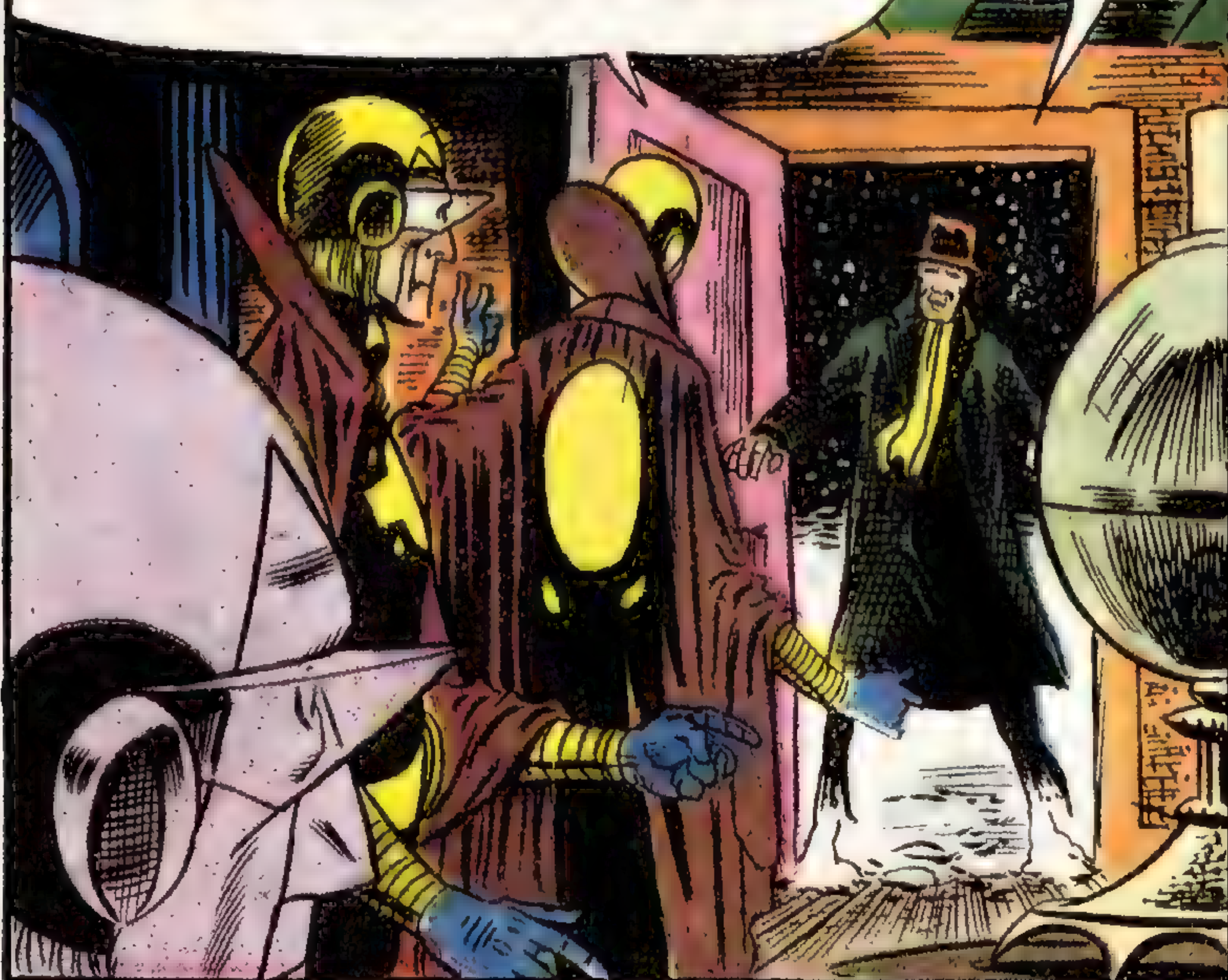
LET ME IN, PLEASE! I'M FREEZING...

COME IN... THE DOOR'S OPEN!



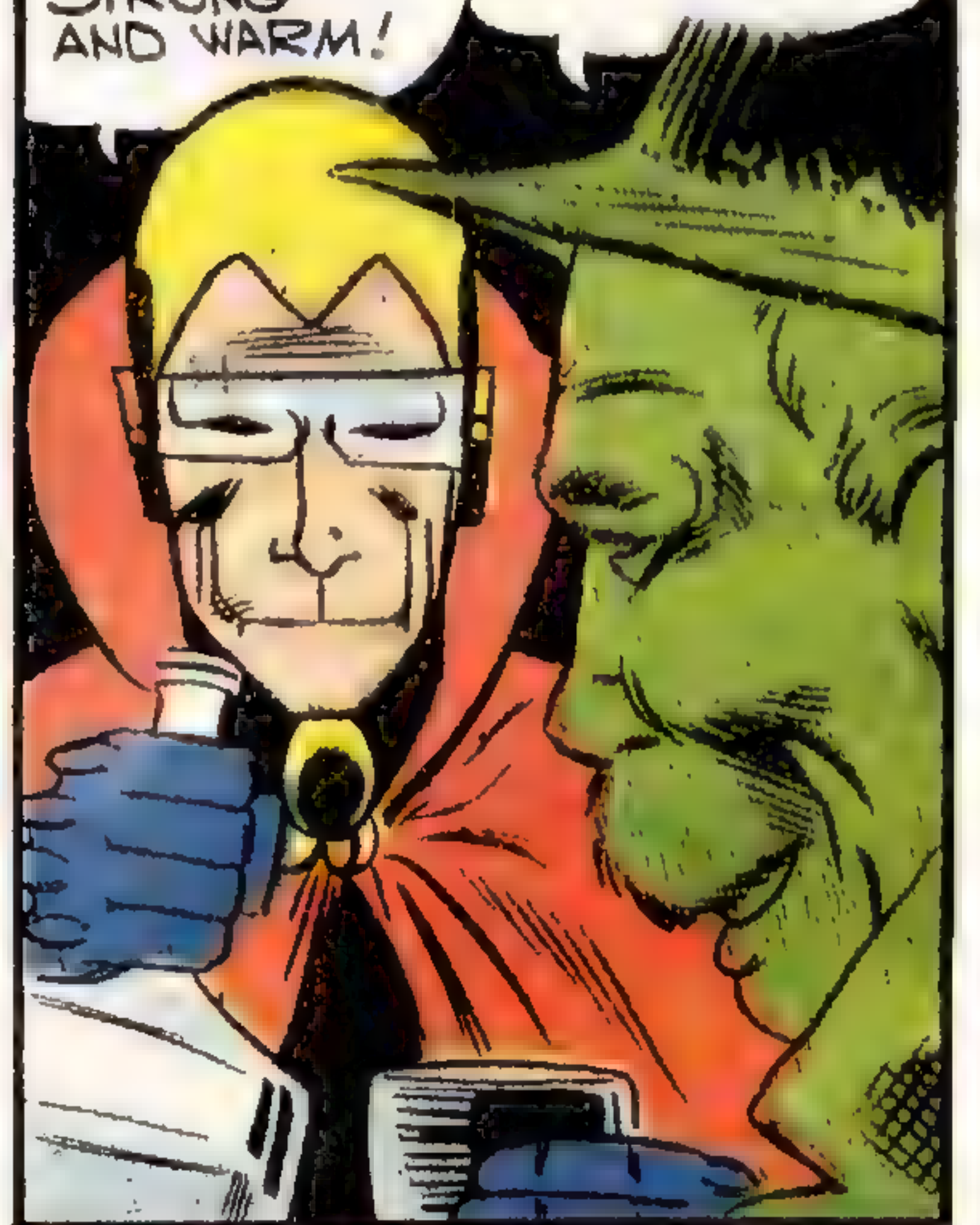
DON'T BE FRIGHTENED! WE WON'T HARM YOU! COME IN AND MAKE YOURSELF WARM! WE'RE REFUGEES FROM THE STORM JUST LIKE YOU!

BUT... WHO ARE YOU?



WE'VE COME FROM ANOTHER WORLD, FAR AWAY, TO STUDY YOUR COUNTRY! HERE, TAKE THIS DRINK! IT WILL MAKE YOU FEEL STRONG AND WARM!

THANK YOU! I GUESS DRINKING IS PRETTY UNIVERSAL! I CERTAINLY CAN USE A SNORT TO WARM UP!



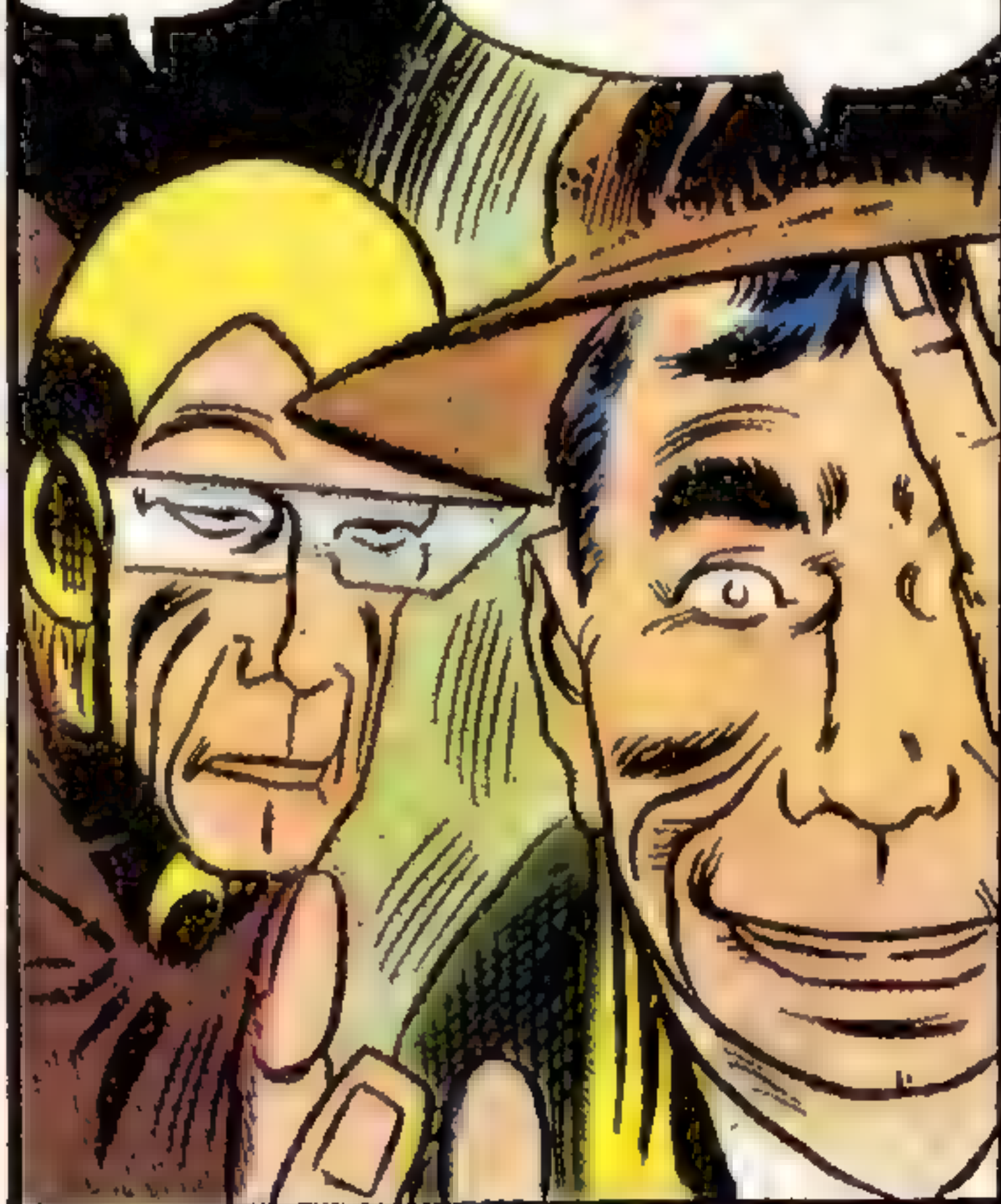
AS EZRA DRANK, A MAGNIFICENT TRANSFORMATION OCCURRED...

MY GOODNESS... (KOFF! KOFF!) THAT'S SURE POWERFUL STUFF!



BY SATURN'S RINGS! LOOK AT HIM!

W-WHAT'S HAPPENING? I FEEL GREAT! LET ME HAVE A MIRROR!



YOU HAVE CHANGED SO MUCH! FORGIVE US! WE HAD NO IDEA OUR ELIXIR WOULD DO THAT TO AN EARTHLING!

WHAT-EVER THAT LIQUOR IS, IT'S WONDERFUL STUFF! WHY, HAPPY DAY! I'M A YOUNG MAN AGAIN!



ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT, EZRA TALKED, AS ONLY A YOUNG MAN CAN, PAINTING A VIVID PICTURE OF CIVILIZATION ON EARTH...

...AND THAT BRINGS YOU UP TO DATE ON THE HISTORY OF OUR COUNTRY.

IT HAS BEEN WONDERFUL LISTENING TO YOU! WE HOPE WE COULD STAY LONGER, BUT DAWN HAS COME AND WE MUST LEAVE AT ONCE!



WHEN THEY LEFT TO CHECK THEIR SPACE SHIP...

I KNOW I SHOULDN'T DO IT-- I'VE NEVER STOLEN ANYTHING IN MY LIFE! BUT THIS ELIXIR IS WORTH A FORTUNE! THINK OF WHAT I CAN DO FOR CORA TO STOP HER CARPING! THEY'LL NEVER MISS THE STUFF!



THE ELIXIR WAS SAFELY STOWED IN HIS SUITCASE WHEN THEY BLASTED OFF...

I'M GOING RIGHT BACK TO TOWN! I'VE GOT A PLAN THAT WILL MAKE CORA THE MILLIONAIRE SHE'S ALWAYS WANTED TO BE!



IT TOOK SOME FANCY CONVINCING TO MAKE HIS BOSS BELIEVE IT WAS REALLY EZRA...

HOLY COW... IT CAN'T BE! BUT IT IS! EZRA, YOU'RE A YOUNG MAN AGAIN! HOW DID THIS MAGIC HAPPEN?

PUT YOUR JAW BACK, BOSS! I'LL TELL YOU THE WHOLE STORY AND ALSO A PLAN I'VE GOT!



A HALF HOUR LATER...

IT'S A CRAZY STORY, EZRA, BUT SOMEHOW I BELIEVE YOU! I'LL ARRANGE THAT CONFERENCE AT YOUR HOME AT ONE O'CLOCK TOMORROW!

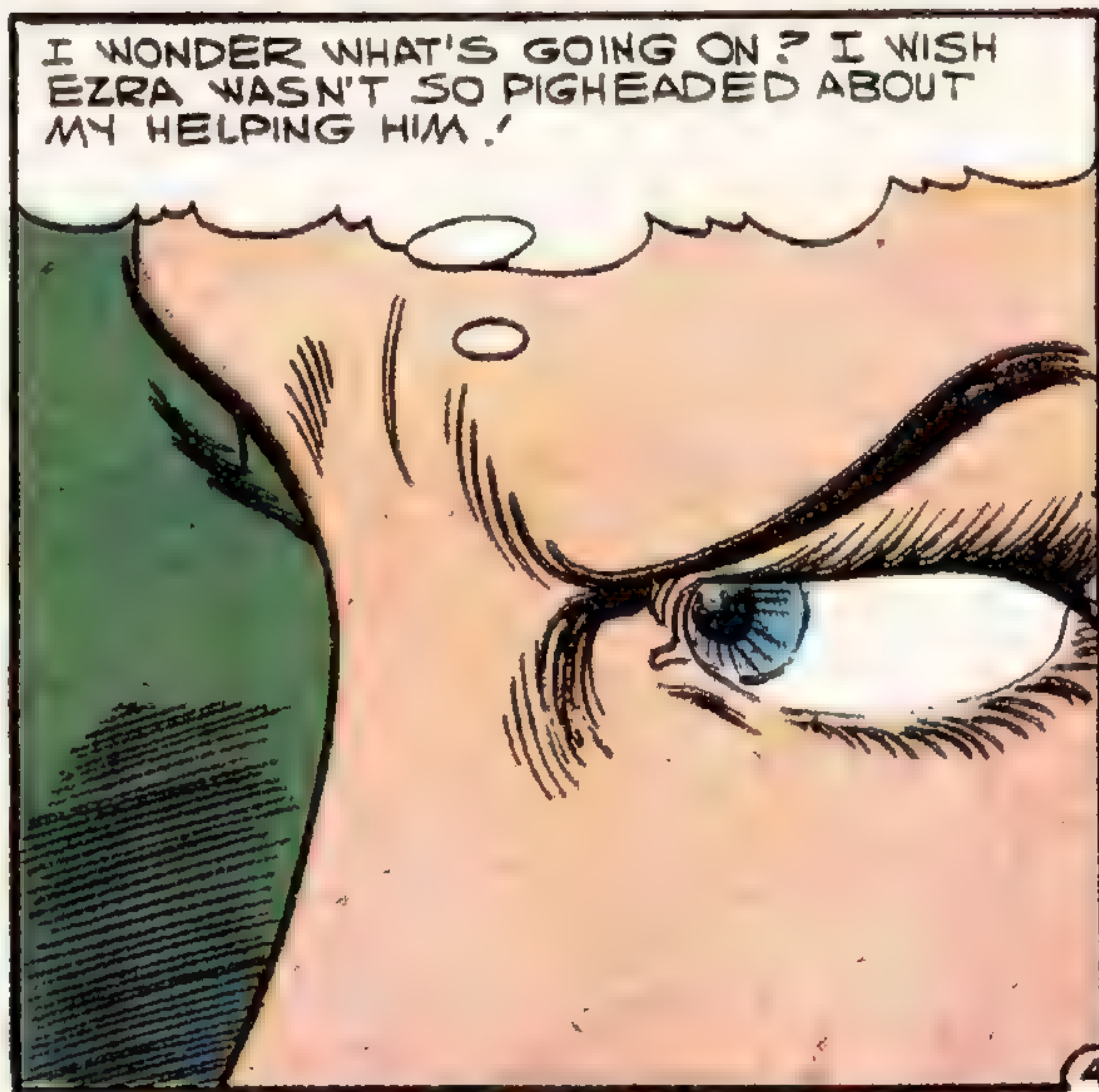
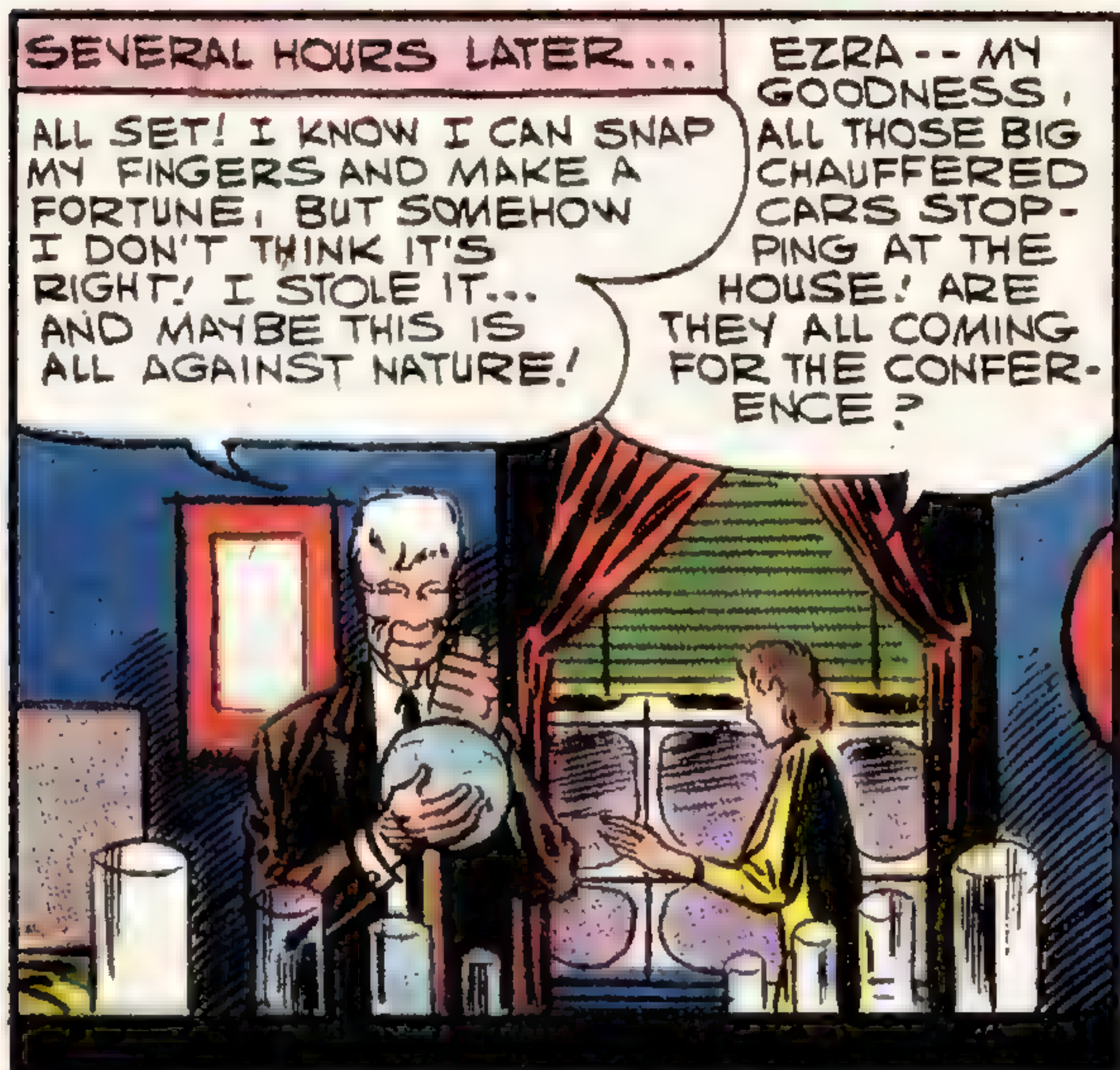
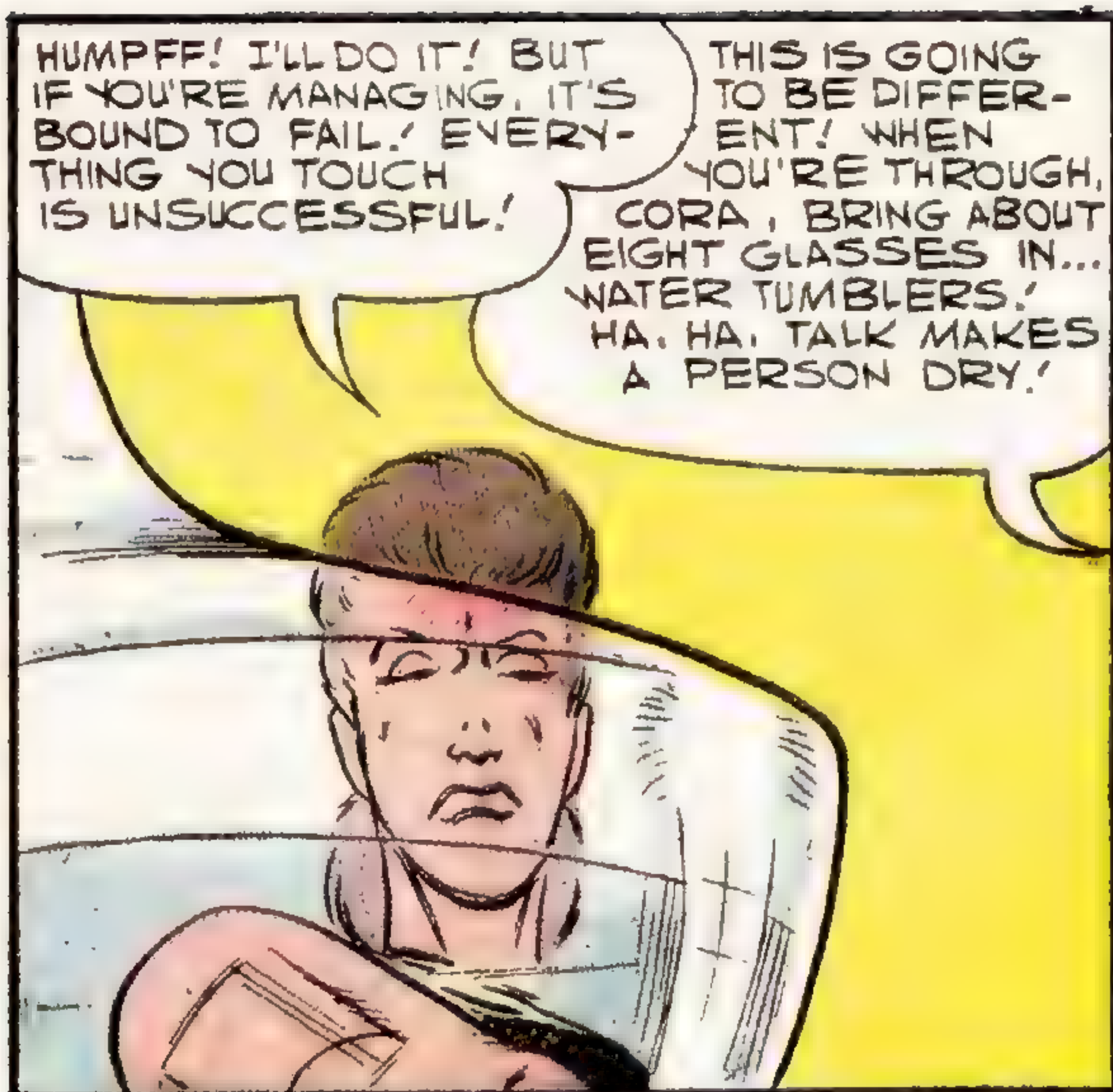
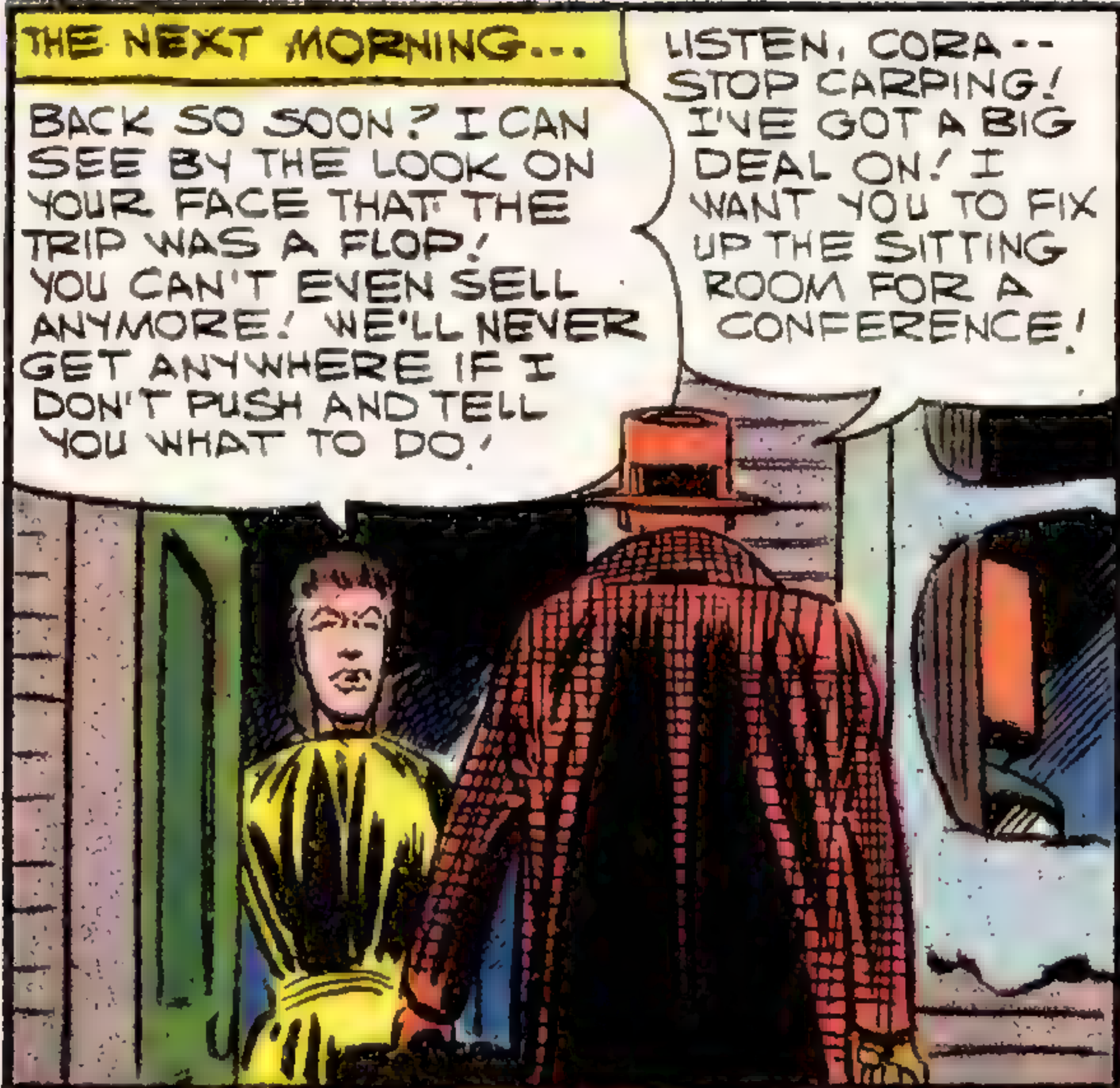
SWELL! MEANWHILE, I'VE GOT TO GET A DISGUISE SO CORA WON'T SUSPECT... I DON'T WANT HER INTERFERING! THIS IS ONE THING I WANT TO DO MYSELF!

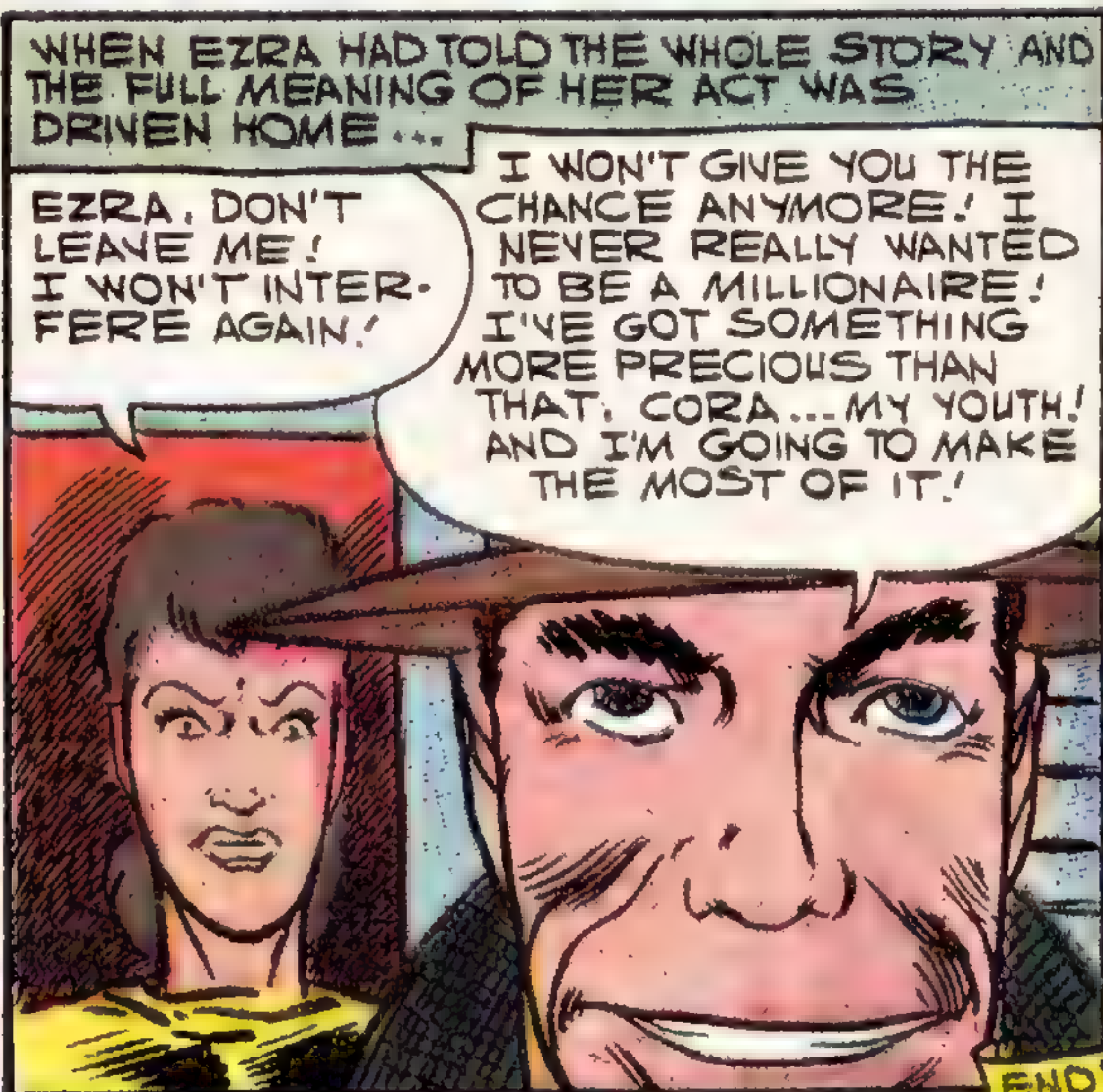
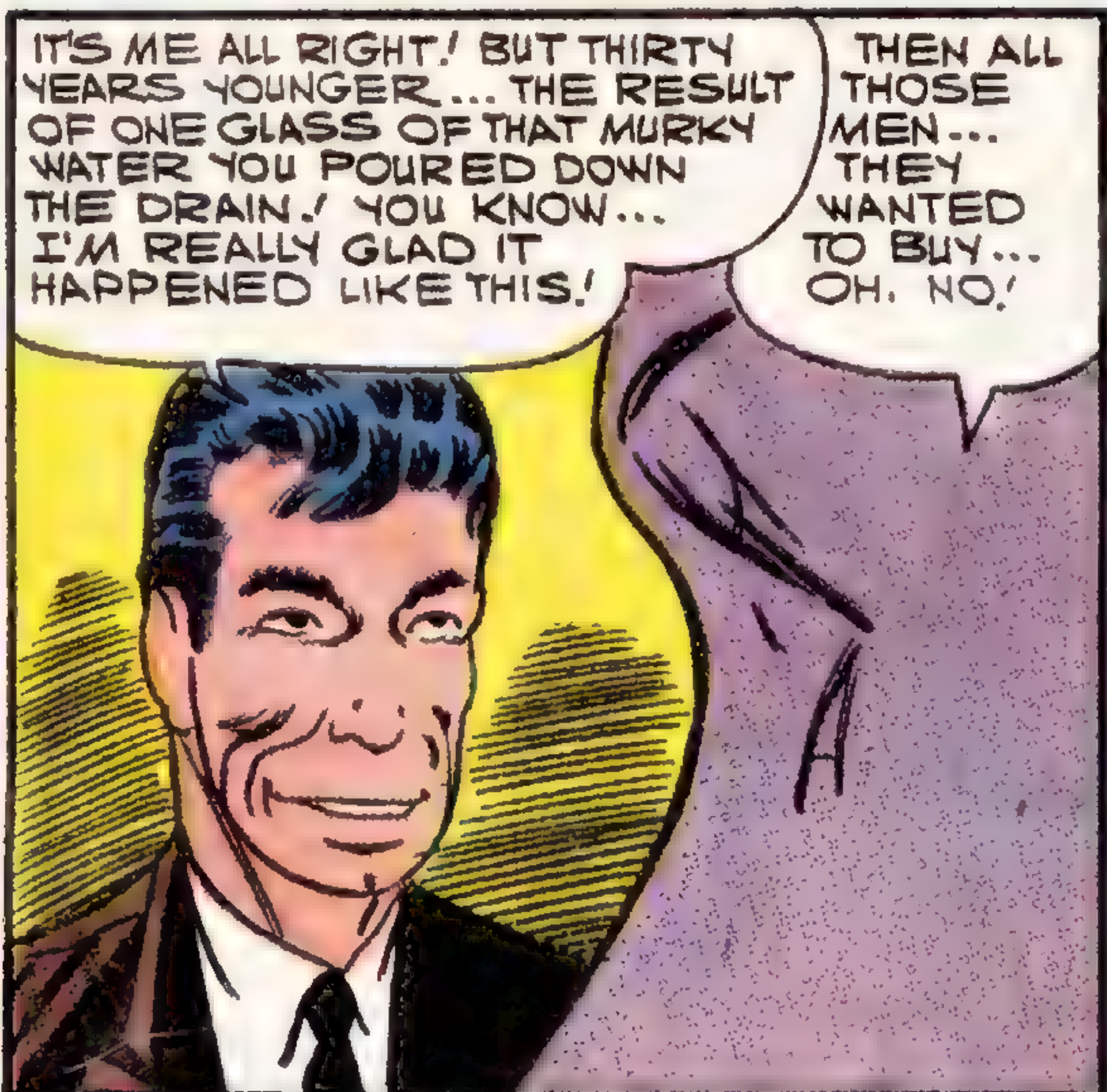
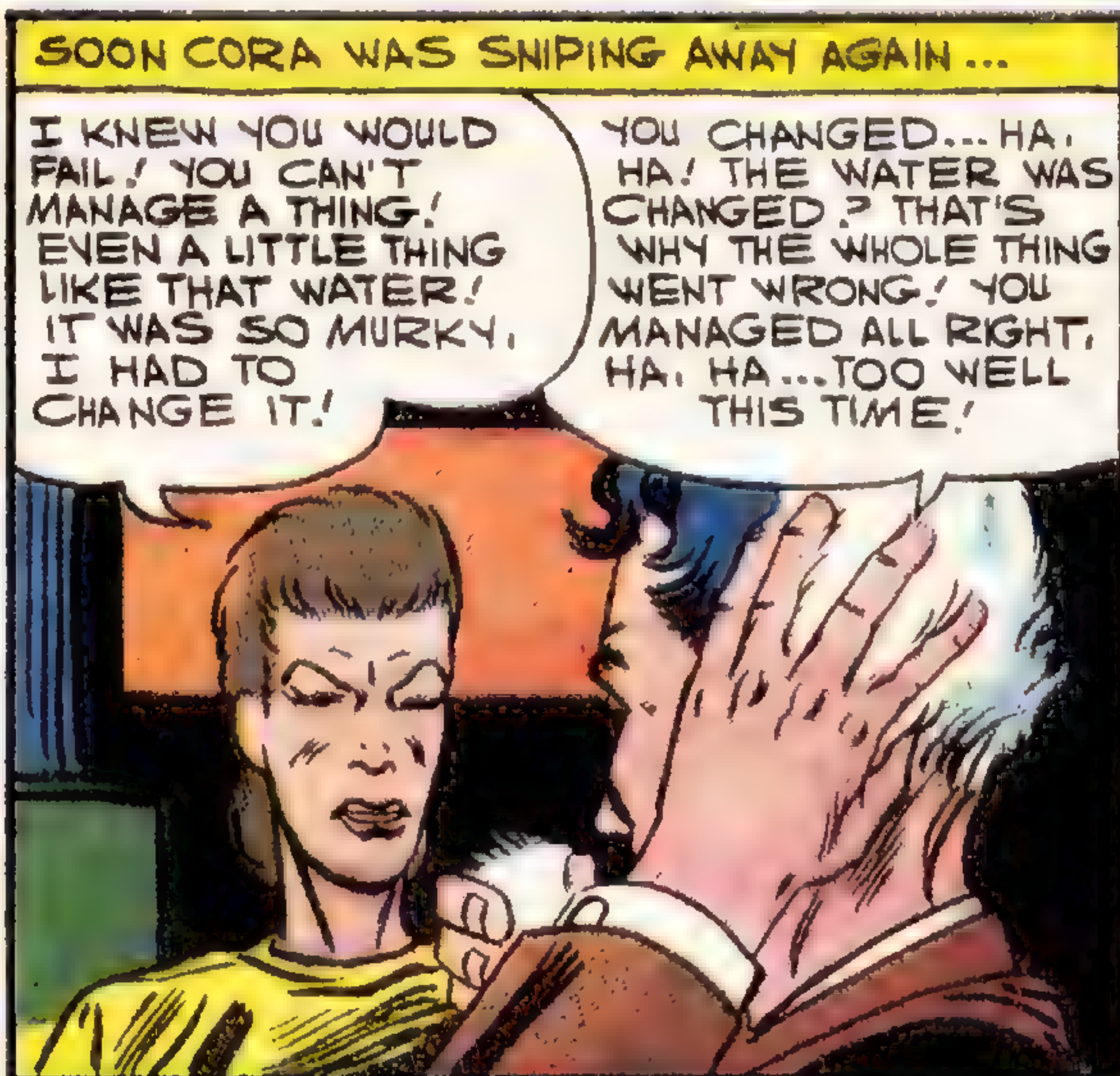
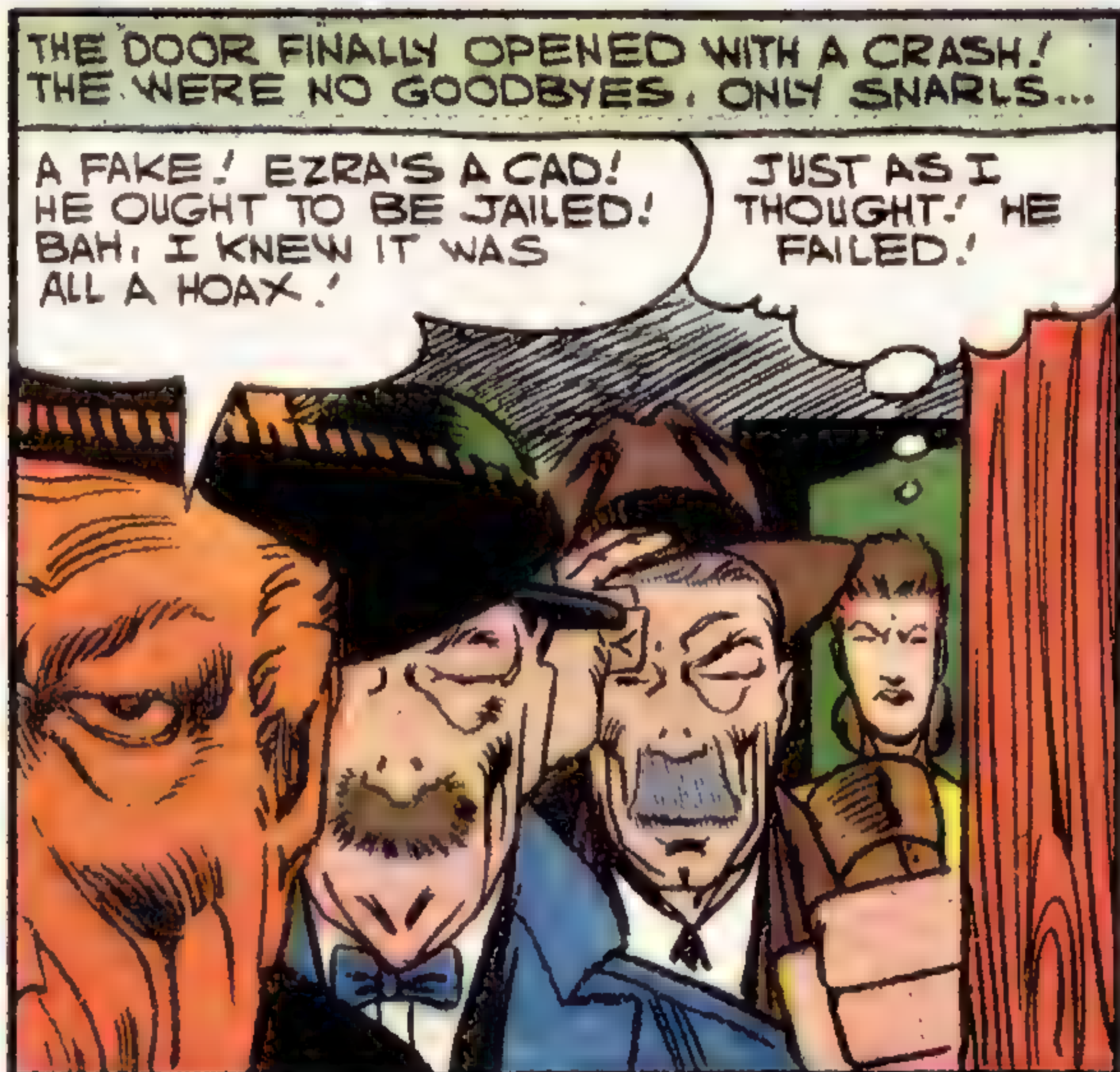
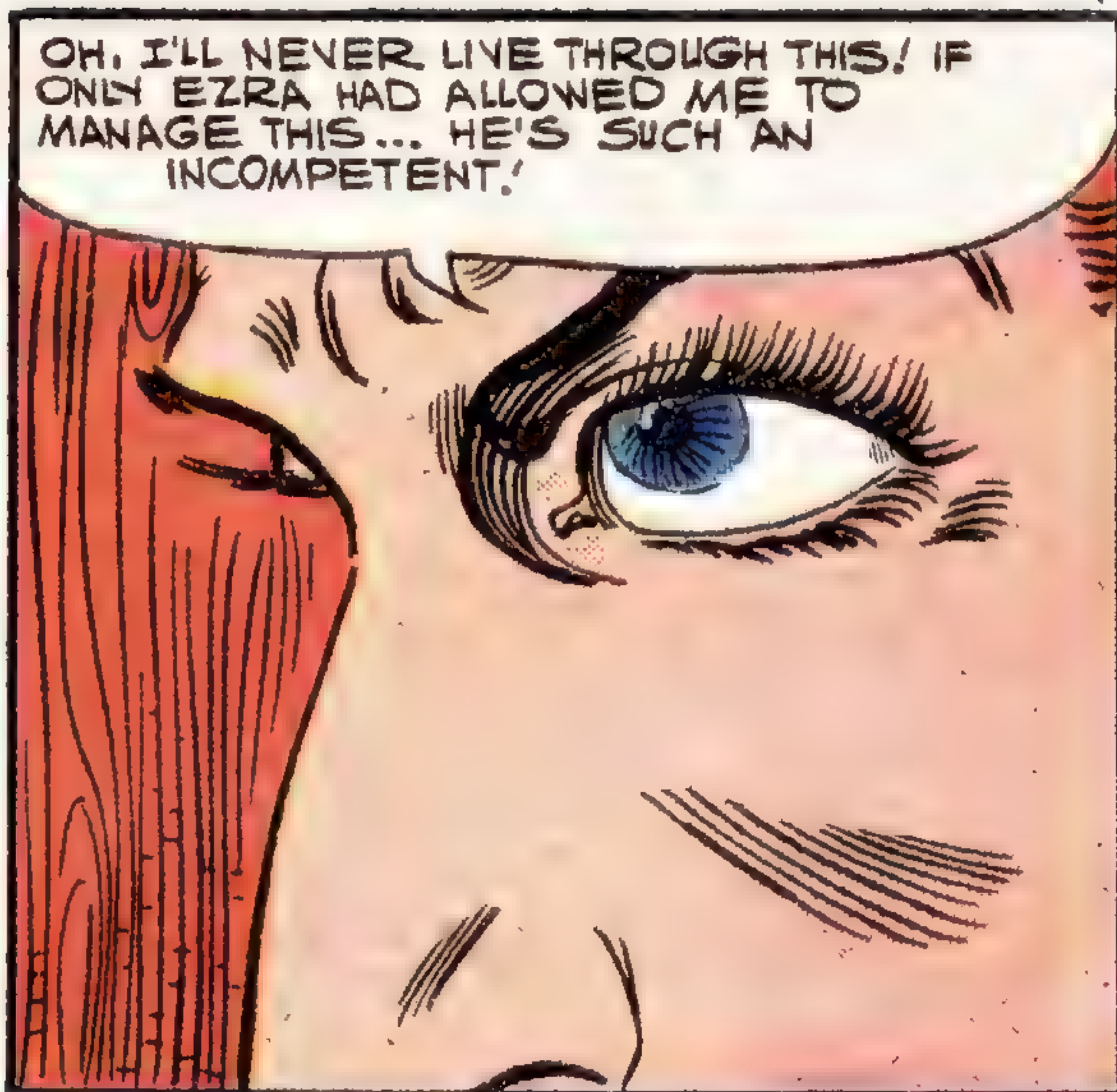


AN HOUR AFTER ENTERING THE THEATRICAL SHOP...

BETTER REMEMBER TO STOOP A LITTLE AND SHUFFLE! THIS GET UP OUGHT TO FOOL CORA! I'LL STAY AT A HOTEL OVERNIGHT AND GO HOME IN THE MORNING! THAT'LL GIVE HER LESS CHANCE TO SNOOP AROUND!







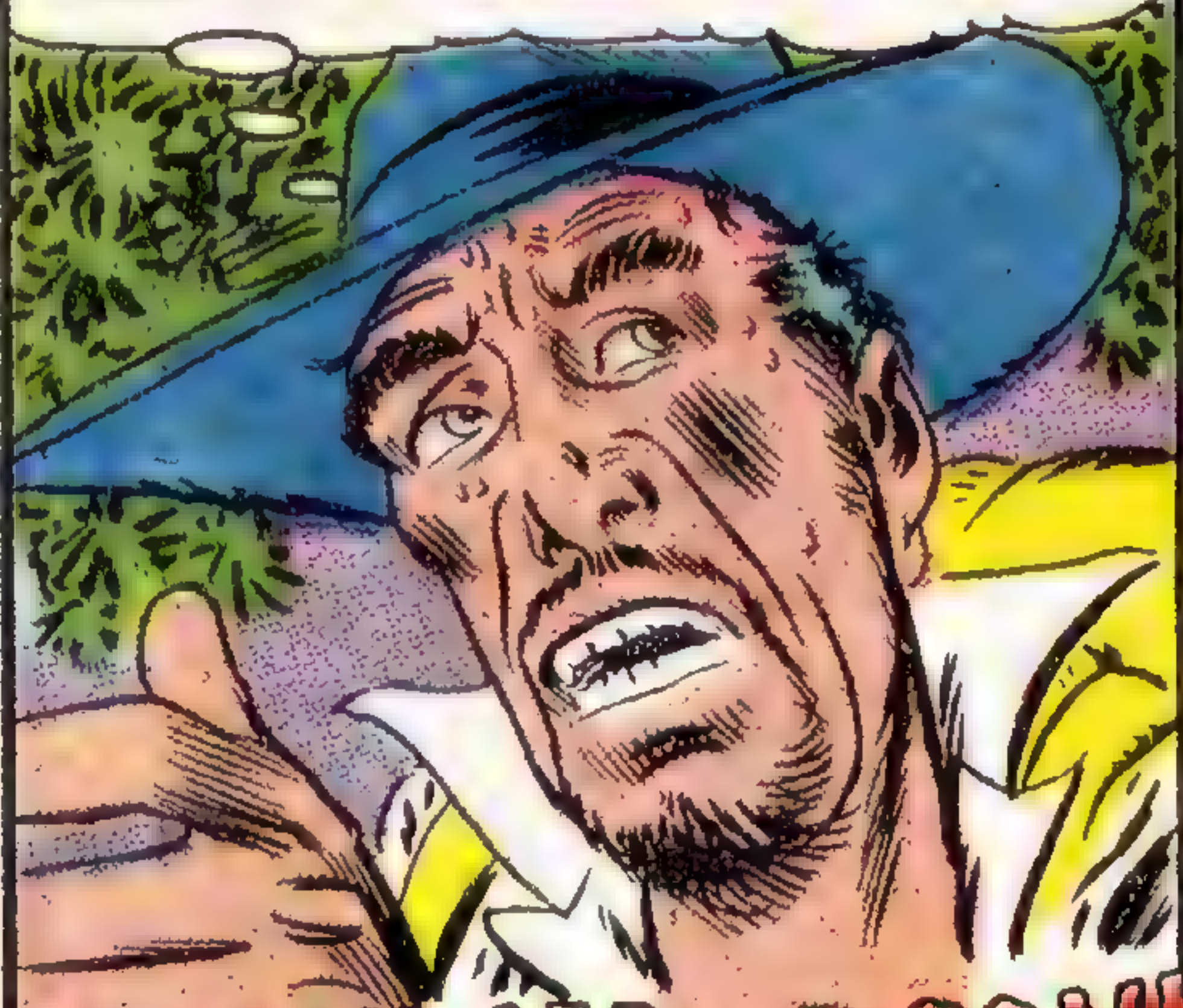
THE DRUMS

THIS IS A TALE OF BLACK FEAR WRITHING IN AN EVIL MAN'S HEART ... AT THE THROBBING BEAT OF THE JUNGLE DRUMS !

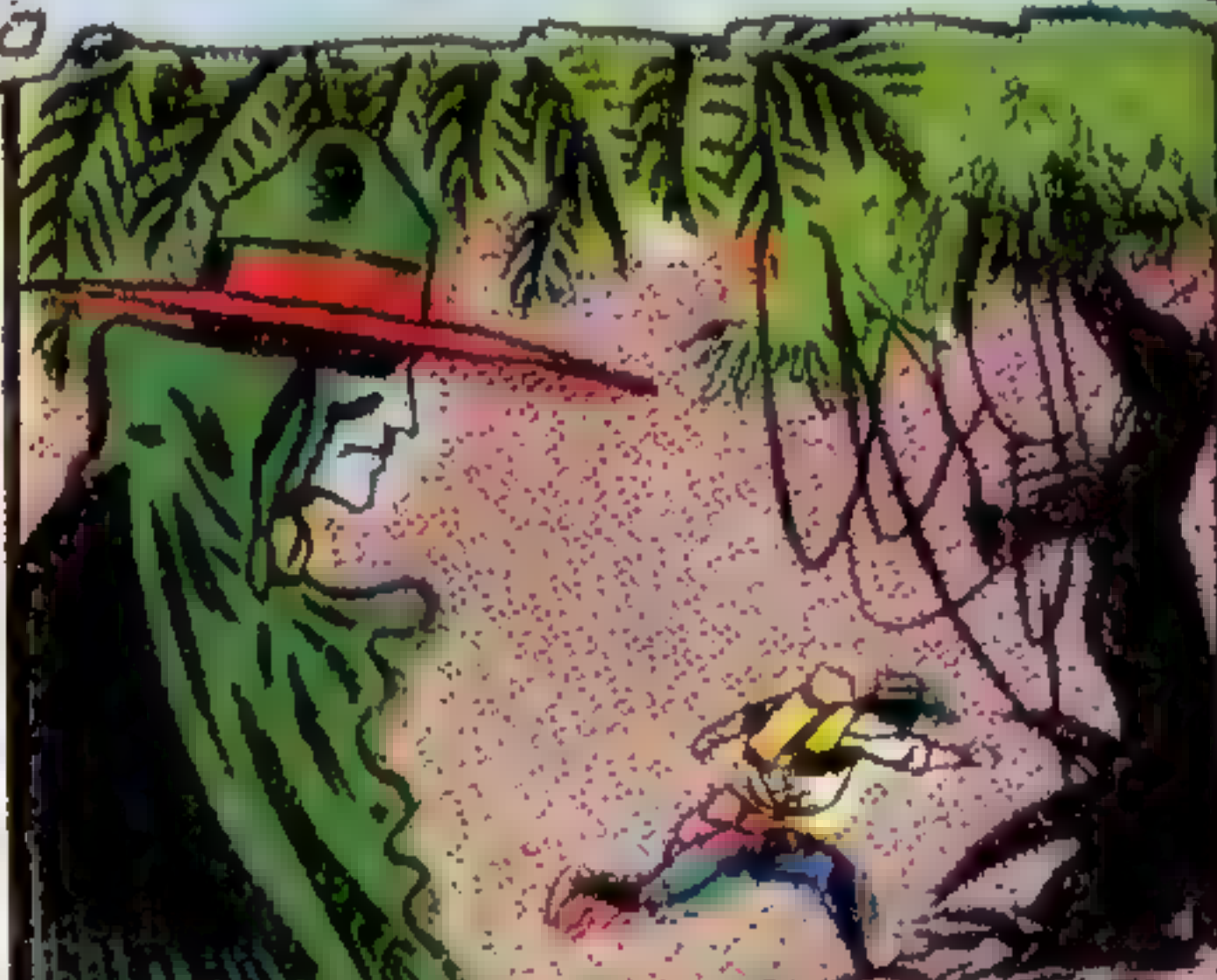


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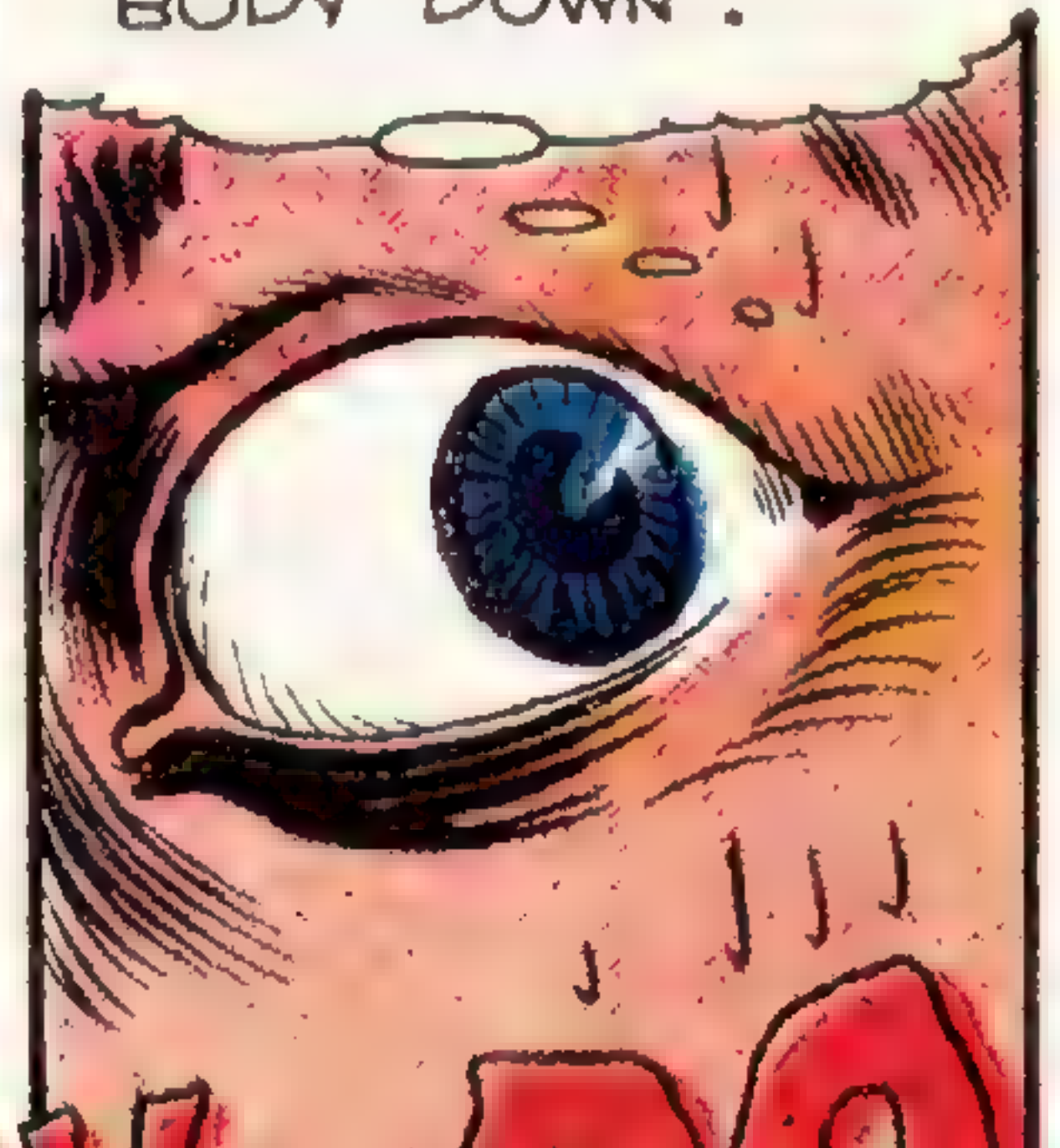
THE NATIVE DRUMS ... I KEEP HEARING THEIR DRUMS ! THEY'RE AFTER ME ! MUST (SOB) GET AWAY !



THE SUN SEARS THE JUNGLE ! THE JUNGLE IS A VAST BOILER, STEAMING WITH HEAT ! BUT THIS MAN SHIVERS AS HE RUNS ! THIS MAN'S BLOOD IS CHILLED BY FEAR !



THOSE DRUMS ! THEY NEVER BEAT THOSE DRUMS ... UNLESS THEY'RE TRACKING SOMEBODY DOWN !



BOOMLAY BOOMLAY BOOMLAY BO

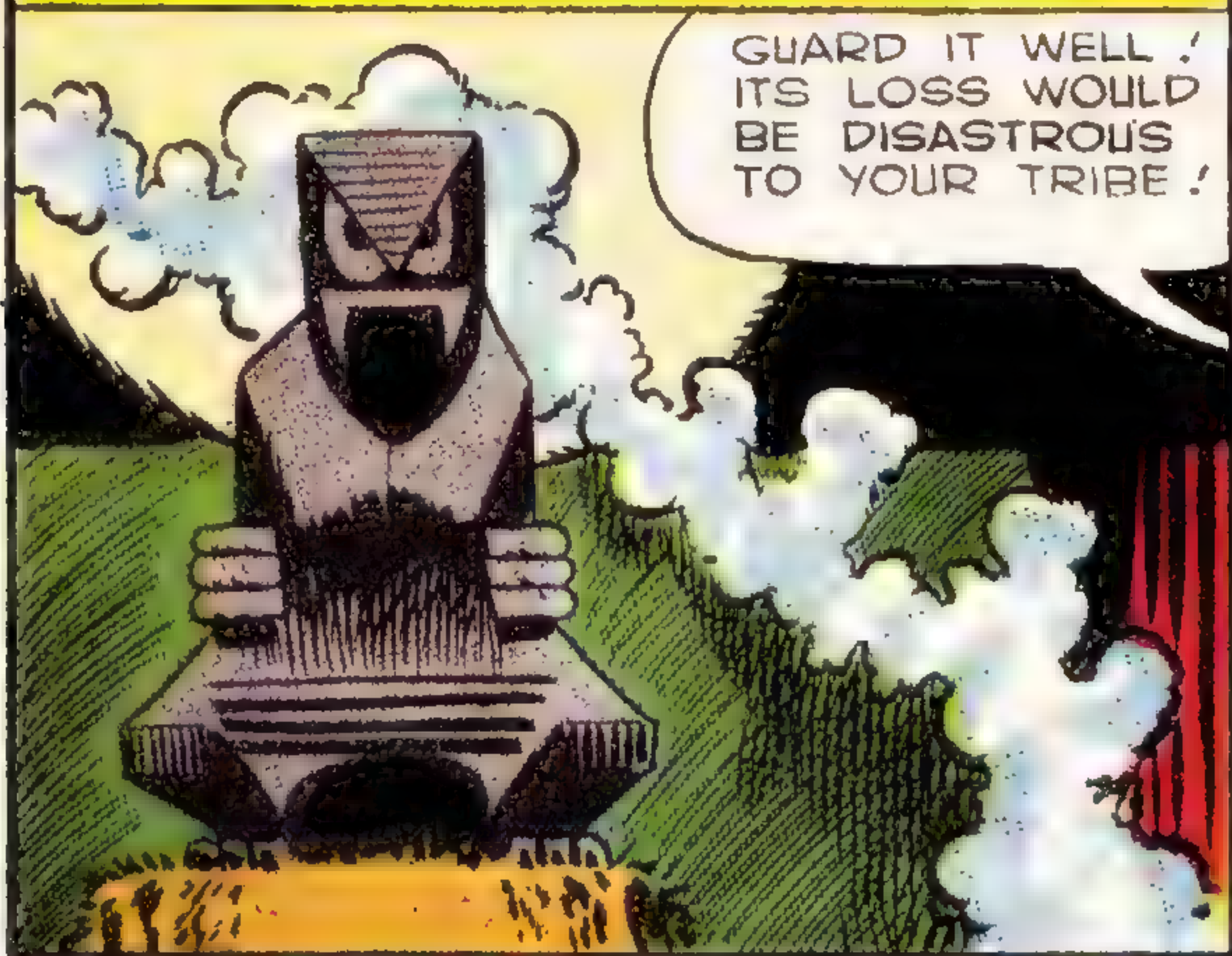
WHOEVER THOUGHT THEY'D
(SOB) FIND OUT SO
SOON ? I WAS SO SURE
I COULD TRICK THEM !
BEEN DOING THE SAME
THING FOR YEARS NOW...
THEY NEVER FOUND OUT
BEFORE !



WHOEVER DREAMED ... WHEN I FIRST SAW THE IDOL ...
THAT **THIS TIME I'D BE CAUGHT ?**



WHERE DID I SLIP UP ? I WORKED IT
EXACTLY THE WAY I'D ALWAYS WORKED
IT ! SLOWLY ... SMOOTHLY ... POSING AS
THEIR GOOD FRIEND !



IT WAS LIKE TAKING CANDY FROM A BABY !
JUST A LITTLE SOFT SOAP ... AND THEY'D
HAVE LET ME STAND IN FRONT OF THE
IDOL UNTIL DOOMSDAY IF I WANTED !
BUT JUST THEN --



I COULDN'T HELP IT ! I KNEW THAT
NOTHING COULD GO WRONG ... BUT AT
THE SOUND OF THOSE DRUMS , I FELT
A TWINGE OF FEAR !

WHAT'RE THEY BEATING
FOR ? YOUR WARRIORS
AFTER SOMEBODY ?

YES BWANA ! OUR TRIBAL LAW
HAS BEEN BROKEN ! EVEN
NOW THE TRANSGRESSOR IS BEING
HUNTED DOWN
IN THE JUNGLE !



HE STILL RUNS AHEAD OF
OUR WARRIORS! BUT
HE HEARS DRUMS! AND
THE DRUMS' LOUDNESS
TELLS HIM WARRIORS
ARE ON HIS TRAIL...
TELLS HIM HE IS DOOMED!



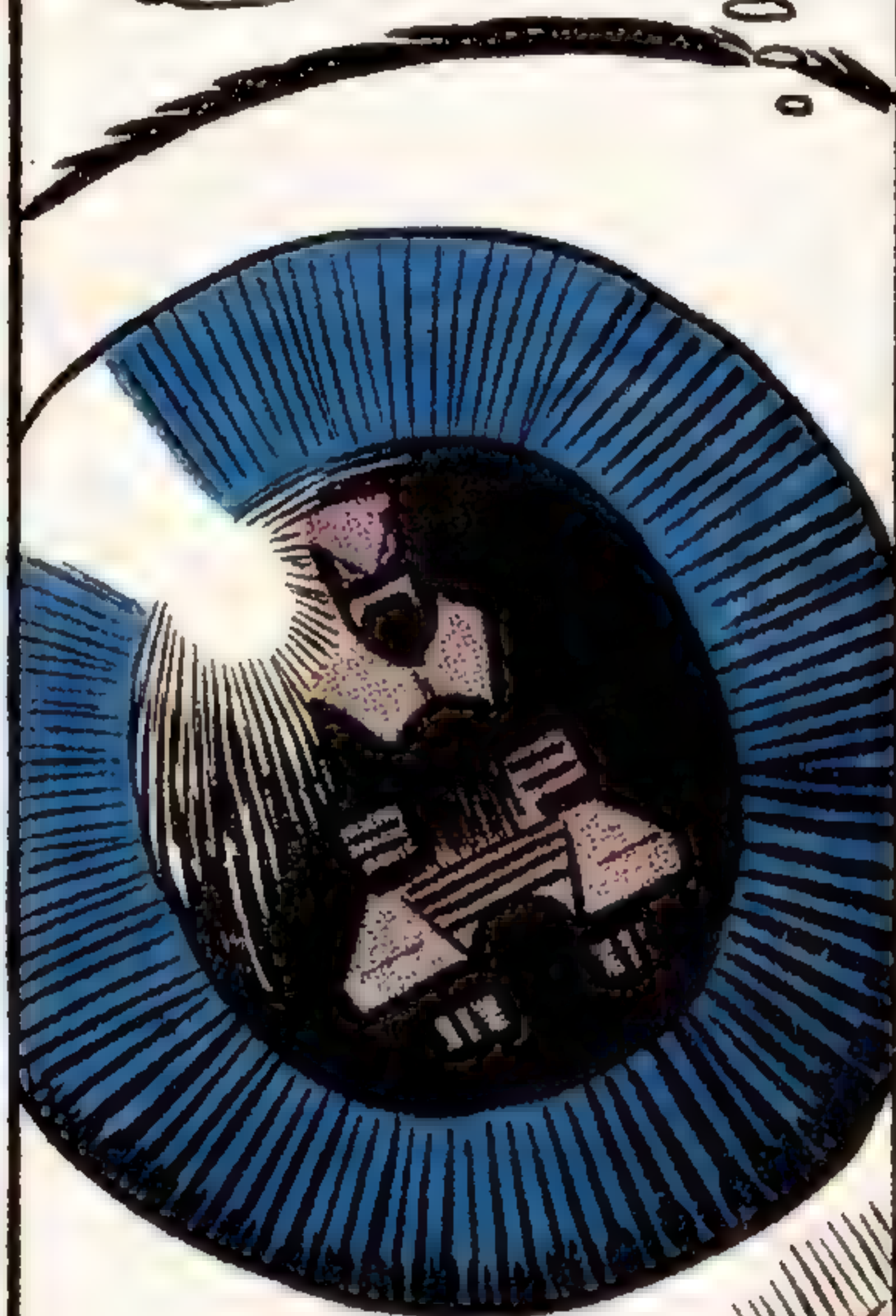
BOOMLAY! BOOMLAY! BOOMLAY!

POOR DEVIL! BUT **I**
HAVE NOTHING TO
WORRY ABOUT! MY
PLAN IS FOOLPROOF...
IT'S NEVER FAILED YET!



THAT'S (**SOB**) WHAT I
TOLD MYSELF! AND SEAL-
ING MY EARS TO THE
DRUMS, I TURNED BACK
TO THE IDOL...

HAVE TO GET A GOOD
LONG LOOK! HAVE TO
MEMORIZE EVERY LAST
DETAIL!



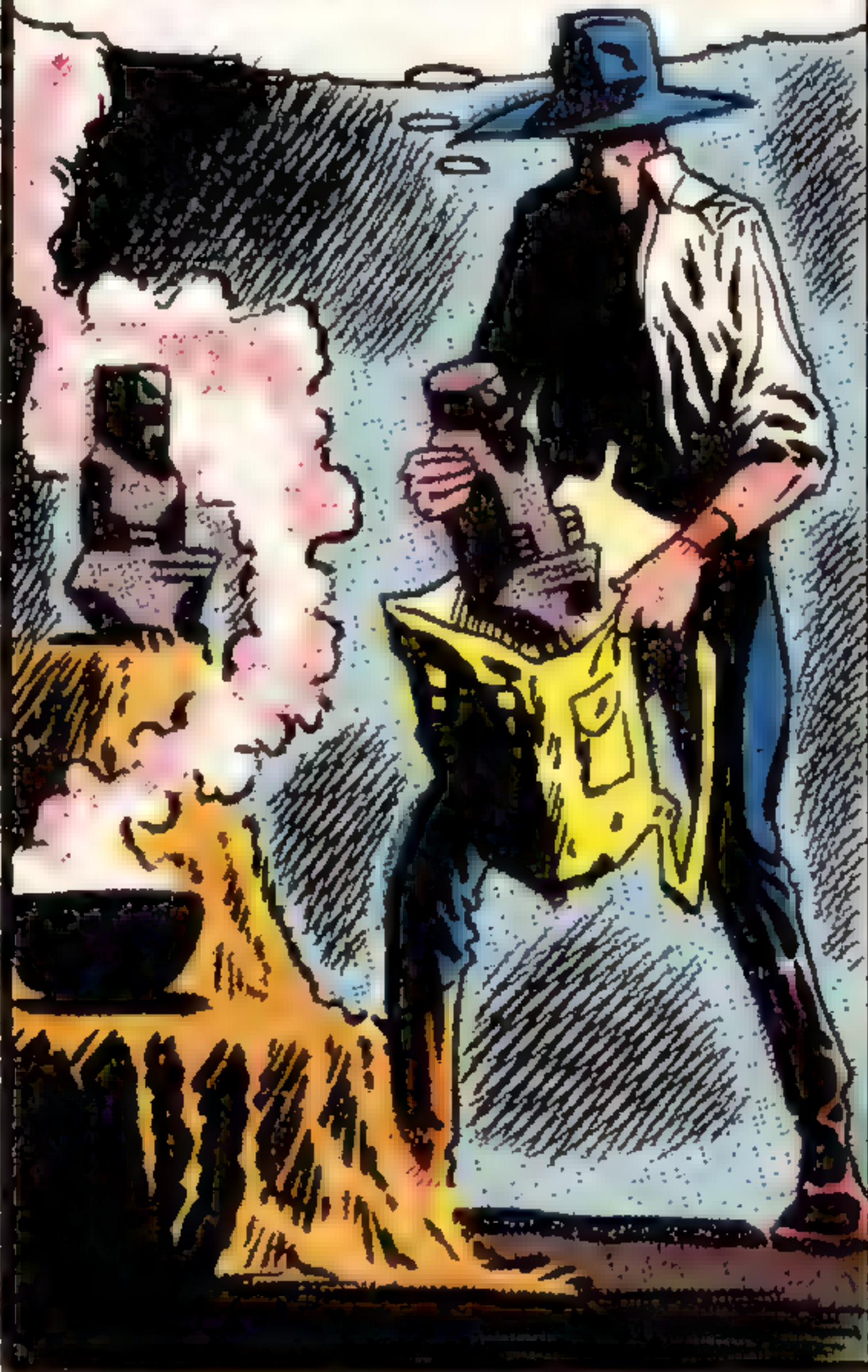
THAT NIGHT I BEGAN CARV-
ING THE DUPLICATE IDOL!

THE NATIVES'LL NEVER
KNOW THE DIFFERENCE!
THEY'LL KEEP PRAYING
TO **THIS!**
THEY'LL NEVER
KNOW I'VE
MADE A
SWITCH!



IT HAD TAKEN ALMOST
A WEEK, BUT AT LAST
I WAS FINISHED, AND
NOW..

I'LL CLEAR OUT IN THE
MORNING! WON'T BE
LONG NOW UNTIL I'LL
BE OUT OF THE JUNGLE..
AND COLLECTING A BIG
FAT FEE FROM THE
MUSEUM AGENT FOR
THE REAL IDOL!!

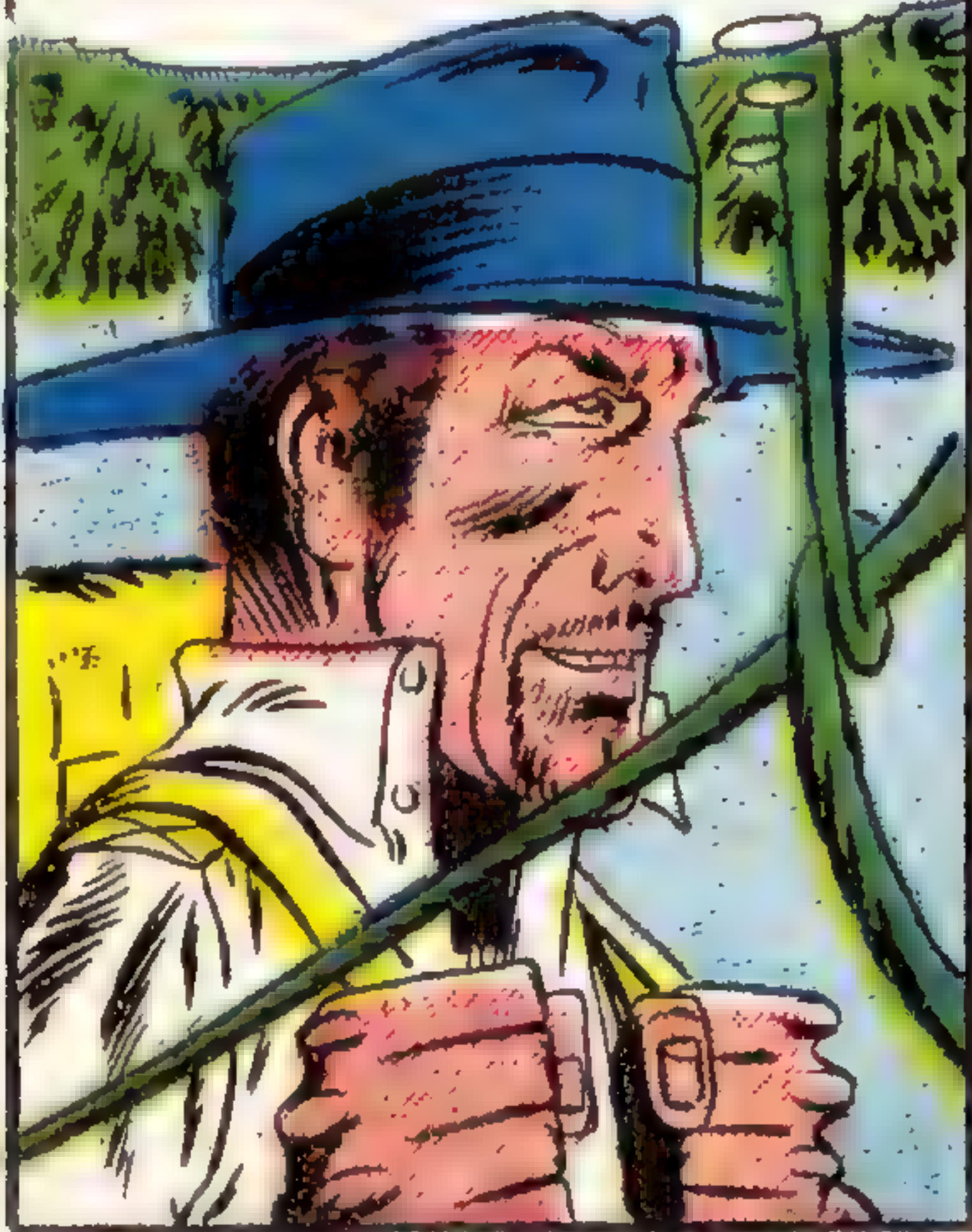


COME AGAIN, BWANA!
YOU GOOD MAN! NOT
LIKE OTHER TRADERS
WHO ALWAYS TRY TO
CHEAT US!



I WAS MAKING GOOD TIME. I'D BE OUT OF THE JUNGLE SOON.

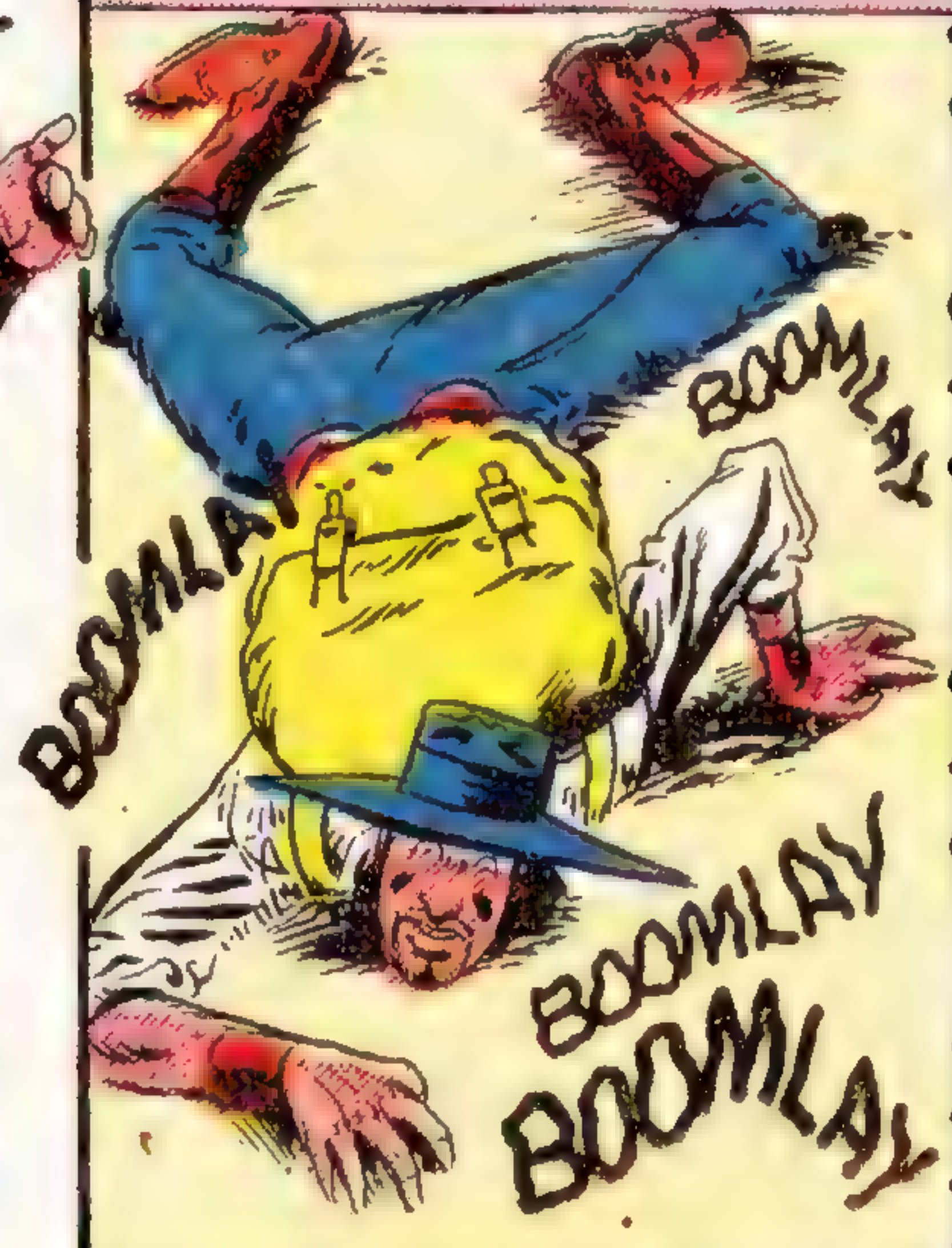
NOT A CHANCE IN A MILLION THAT THEY'LL EVER SPOT THE DIFFERENCE. NOT A...



HEY?!



IT WAS THEN, LYING THERE AFTER THE HARD FALL, THAT I FIRST HEARD THE DRUMS.



AND SO HE HAS BEEN RUNNING EVER SINCE, BUT BLUNDERINGLY, FOR THE DRUMS' LOUDNESS HAS REMAINED CONSTANT, AND THE FEAR IN HIS HEART HAS BLINDED HIM.



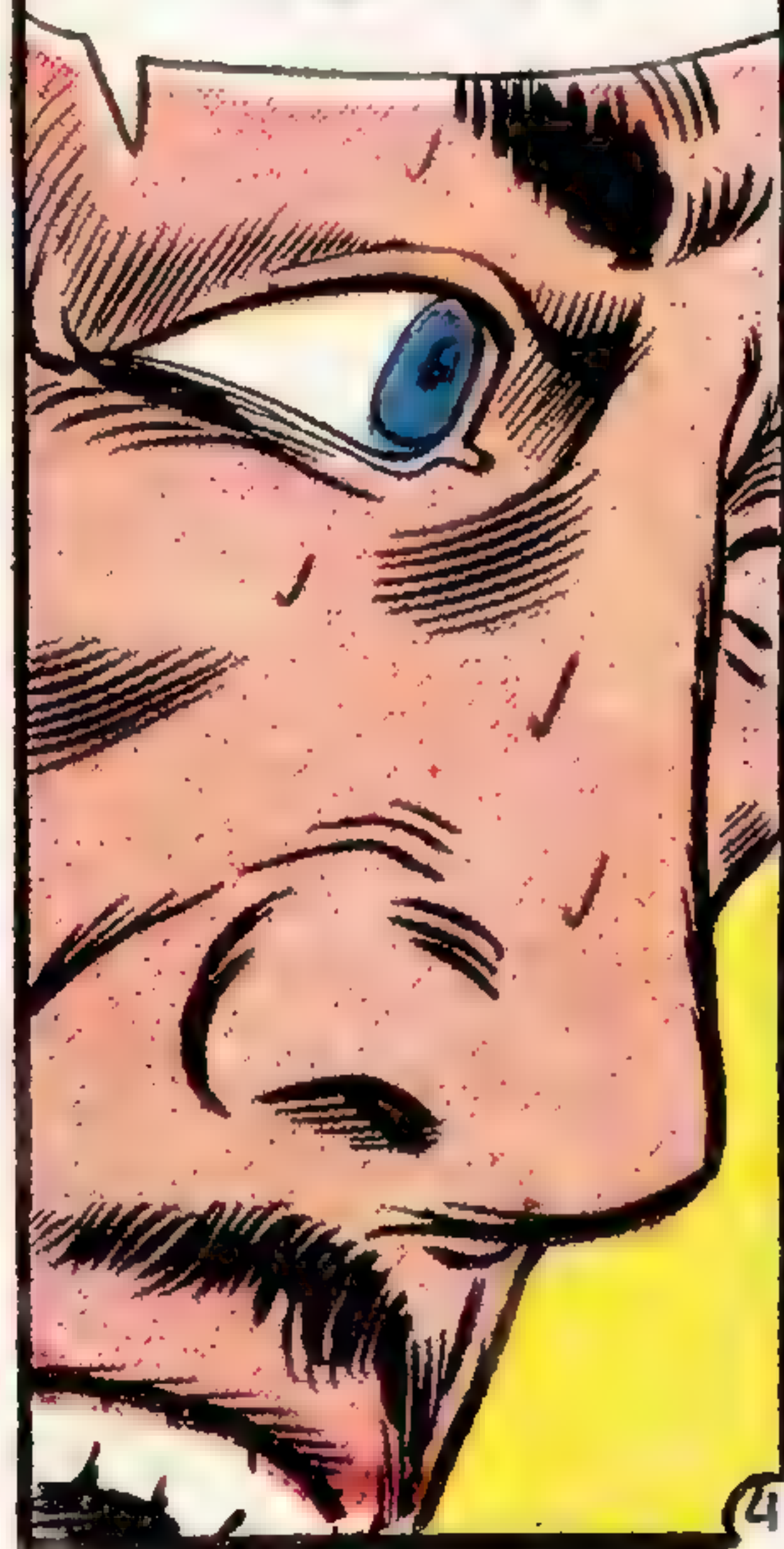
I - I'M LOST, AND THE DRUMS (SOB) ARE AS CLOSE AS EVER.



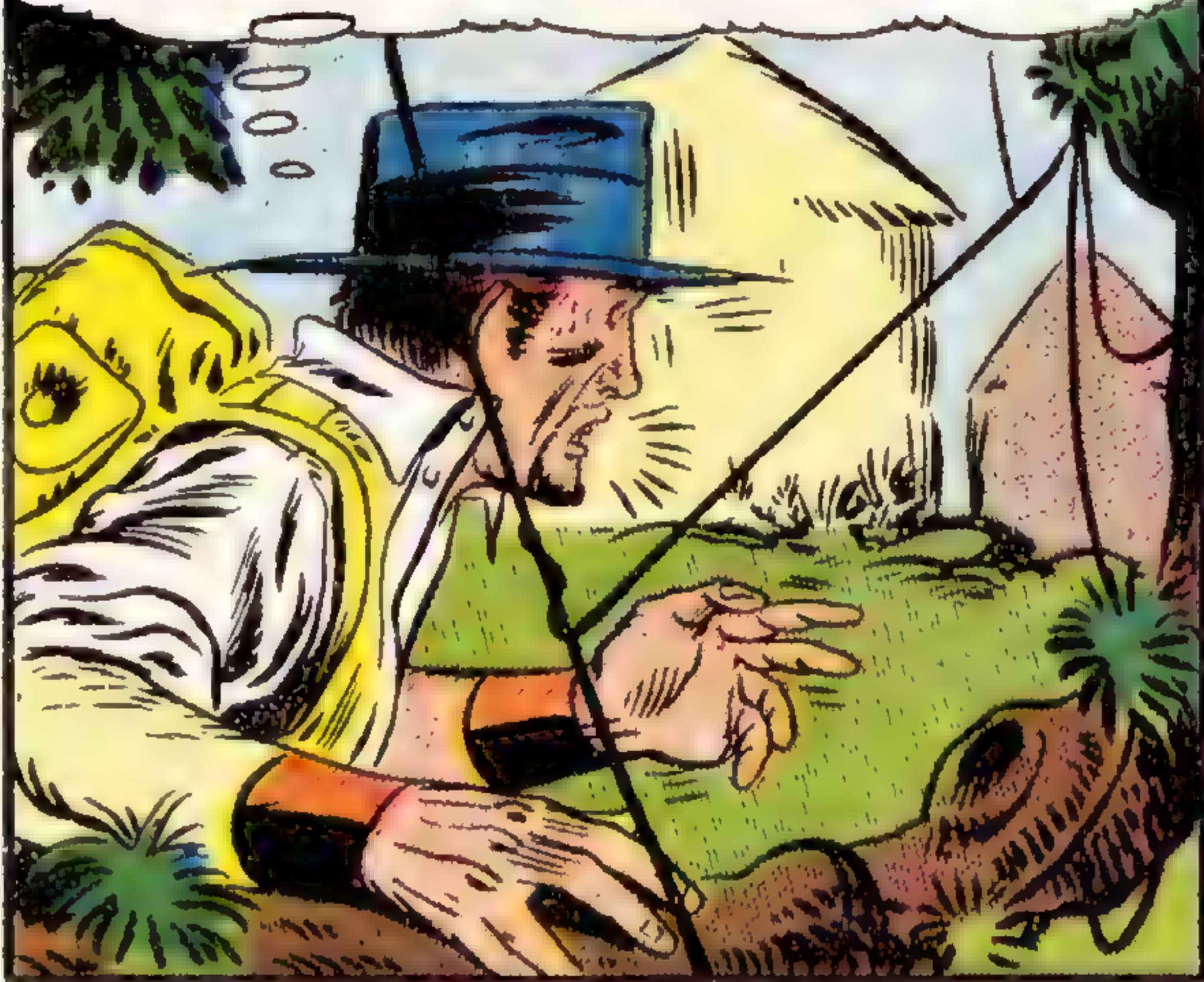
HIS BREATH RASPS SAWINGLY, AND EVERY STEP SEEMS TO DRAIN HIS LAST OUNCE OF STRENGTH. BUT THE DRUMS KEEP THROBBING... AND FEAR KEEPS PUSHING HIM ON... UNTIL AT LAST --



OH (GROAN)
NO !!!



I-I **CIRCLED BACK** WITHOUT KNOWING ! I'M RIGHT BACK WHERE I STARTED ... WITH THE NATIVES !



TAKE IT ! PLEASE TAKE IT ! I'LL NEVER CHEAT AGAIN.... ONLY PLEASE (SOB) STOP THOSE DRUMS !

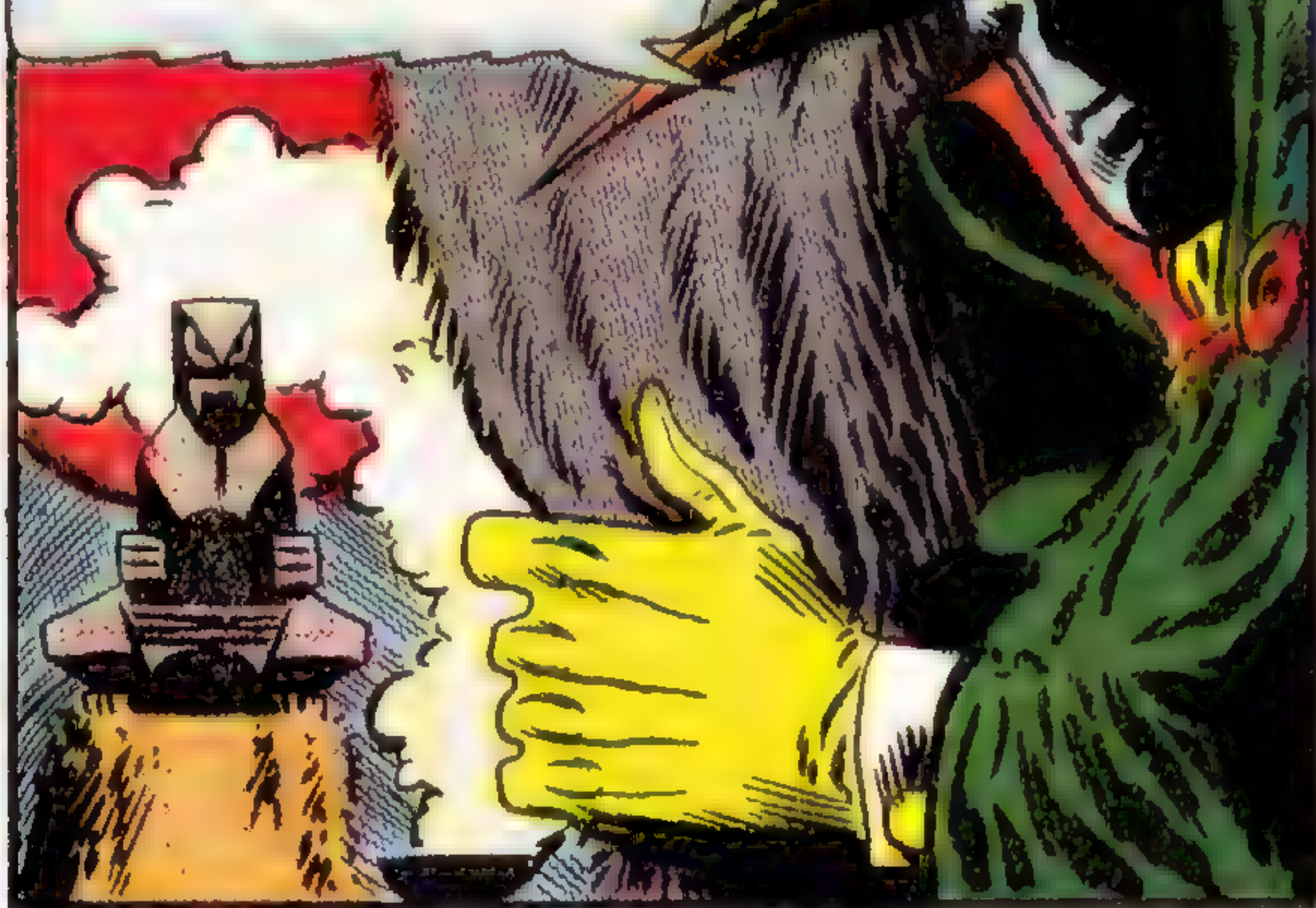


HE SPEAKS OF DRUMS ! WHOSE DRUMS COULD THEY HAVE BEEN !

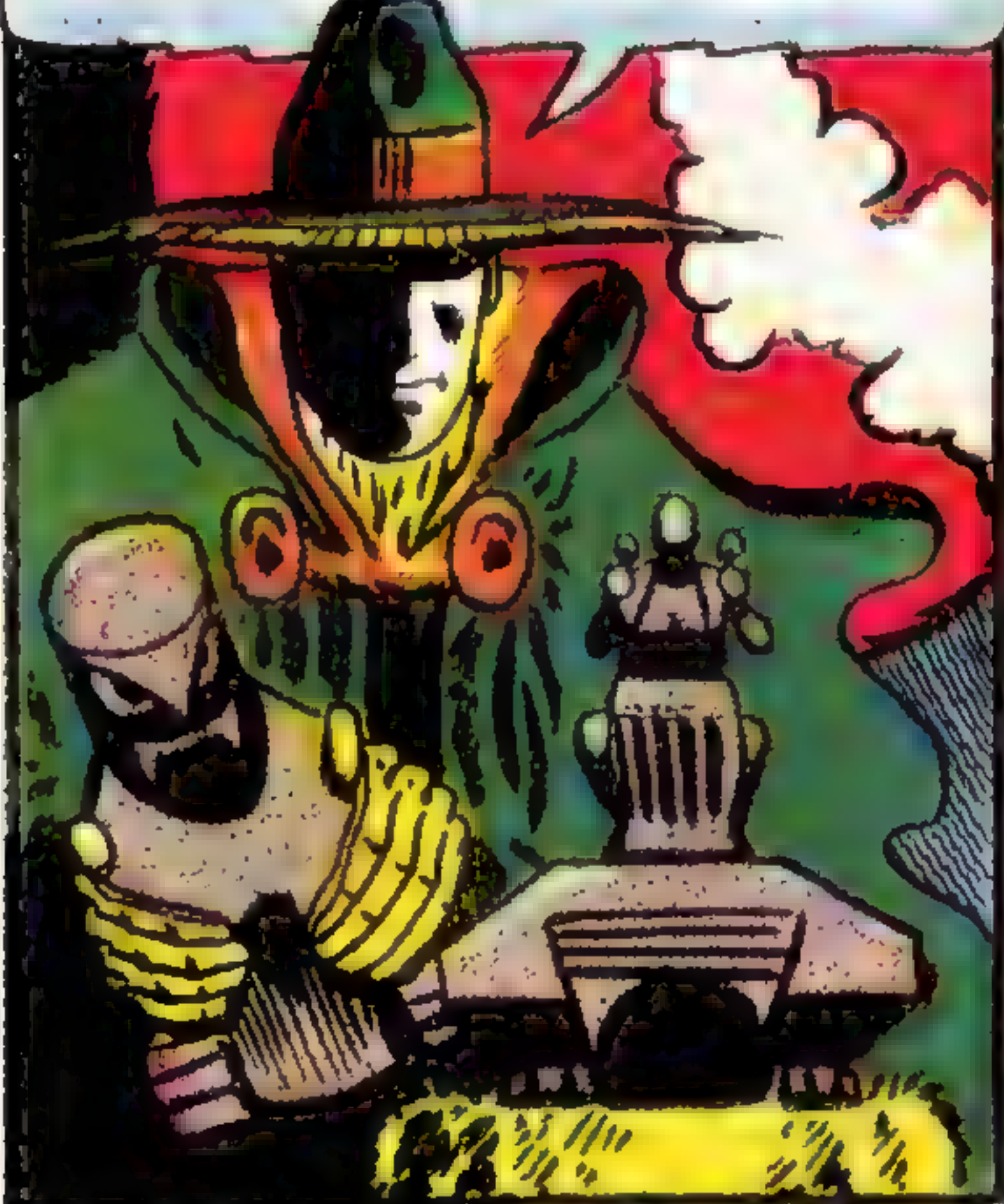
THERE IS NO OTHER TRIBE IN THIS PART OF THE JUNGLE ! AND **OUR DRUMS HAVE BEEN QUIET !**



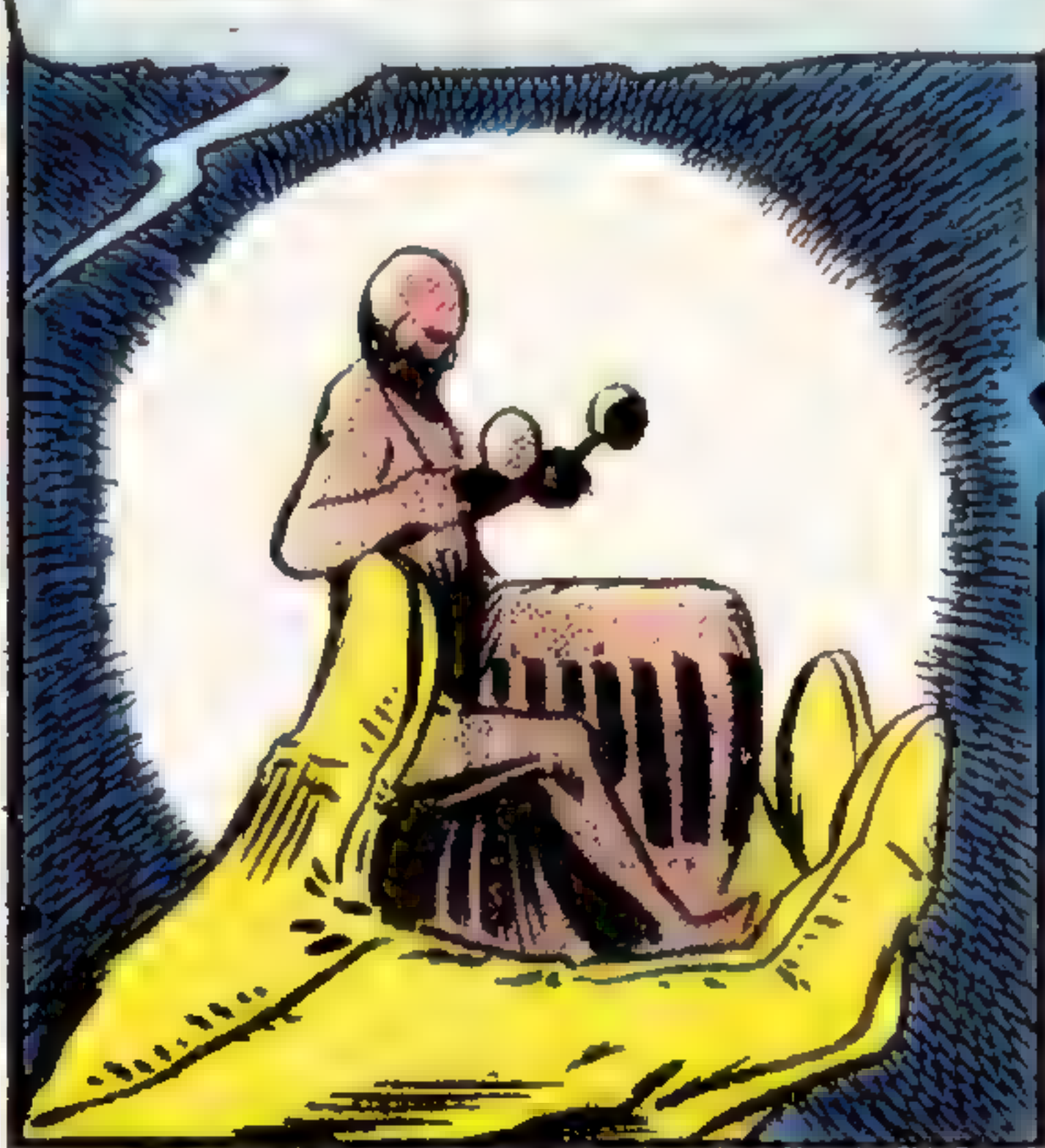
WHOSE DRUMS COULD THEY HAVE BEEN ? ONLY DR. HAUNT KNOWS ! AND NOW YOU SHALL KNOW, TOO ! COME !



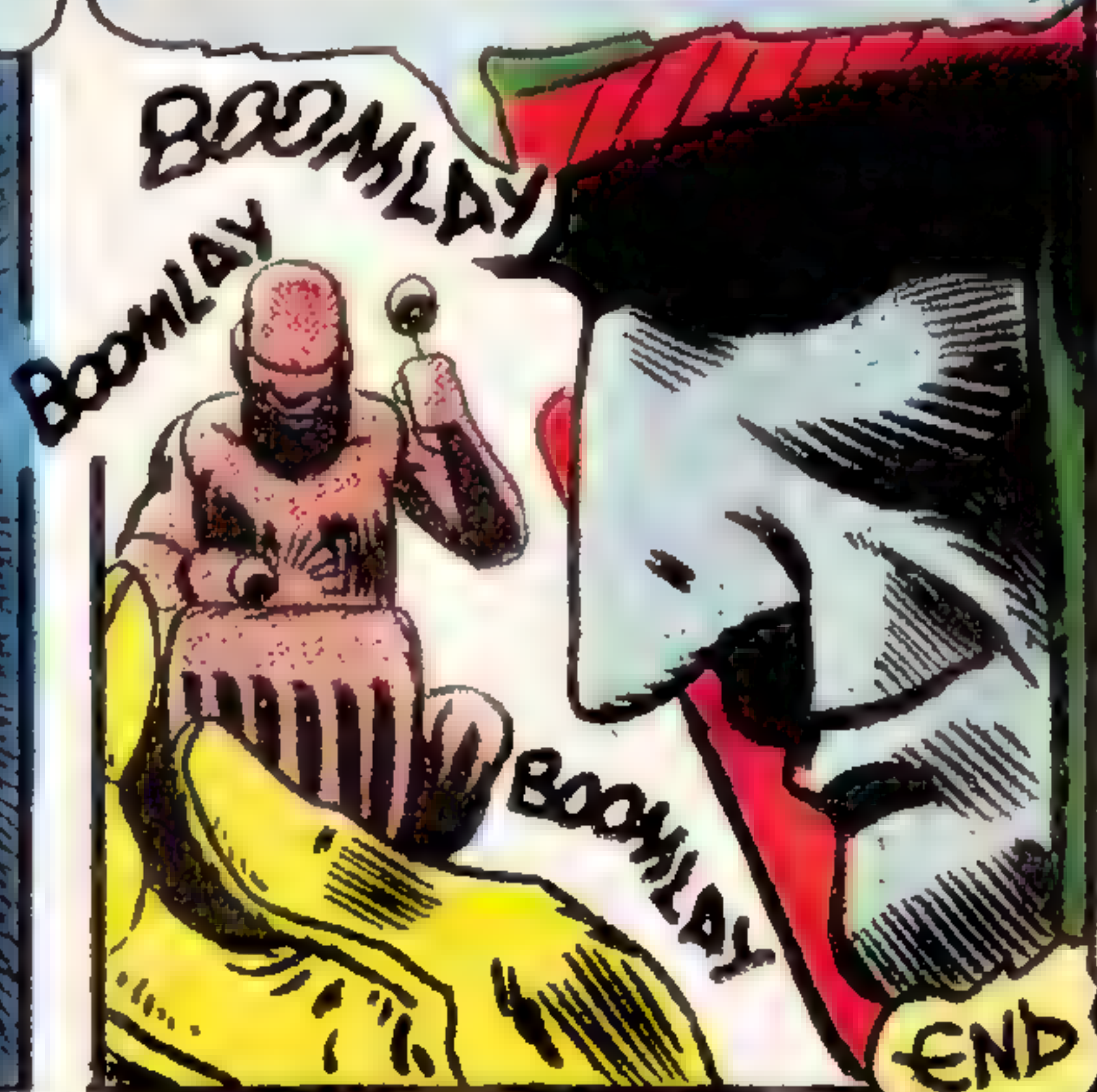
SEE ! I UNSCREW THE IDOL ! NOW BEHOLD WHAT STANDS INSIDE ! **ANOTHER SMALLER IDOL**



...WITH A **DRUM** HANGING FROM ITS NECK ... AND STICKS IN ITS HANDS ! STICKS THAT WERE FIRST **ACTIVATED** BY THE JOLT OF THE TREACHEROUS TRADER'S HARD FALL !



... AND THAT **KEPT BEATING** THEIR MERCILESS RYTHM **AS HE RAN** BLINDLY THROUGH THE JUNGLE , BEARING HIS DOOM ON HIS OWN BACK !



THE MAN WHO CHANGED BODIES

THE WIND SHRIEKS TONIGHT LIKE A WAILING BANSHEE, FOR ALL TO HEAR AND TREMBLE AT. BUT THE SOUNDLESS WAIL IN THE DERELICT'S HEART CAN BE HEARD... ONLY BY DR. HAUNT.

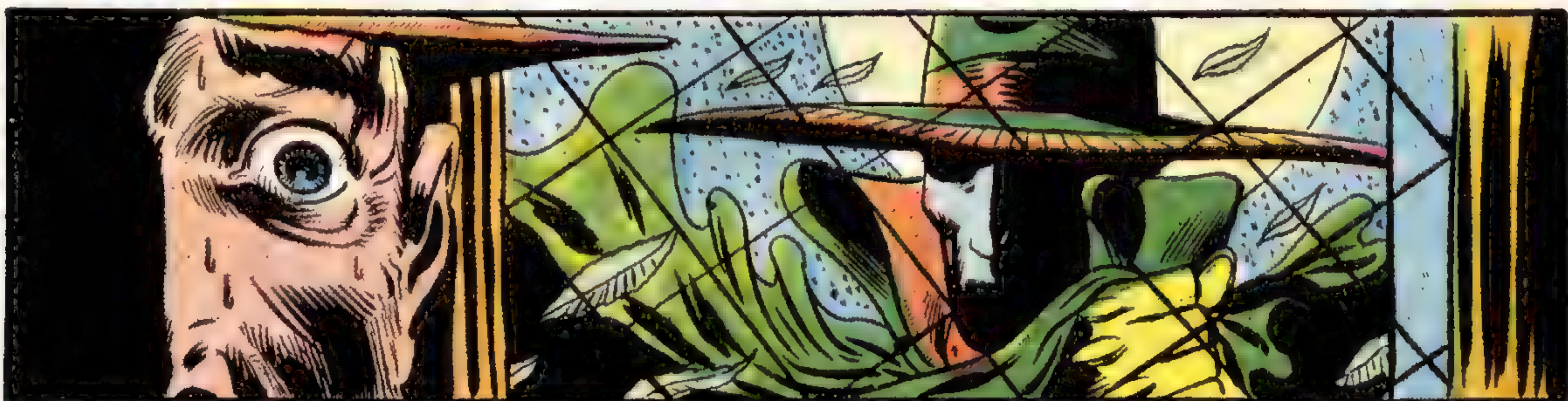
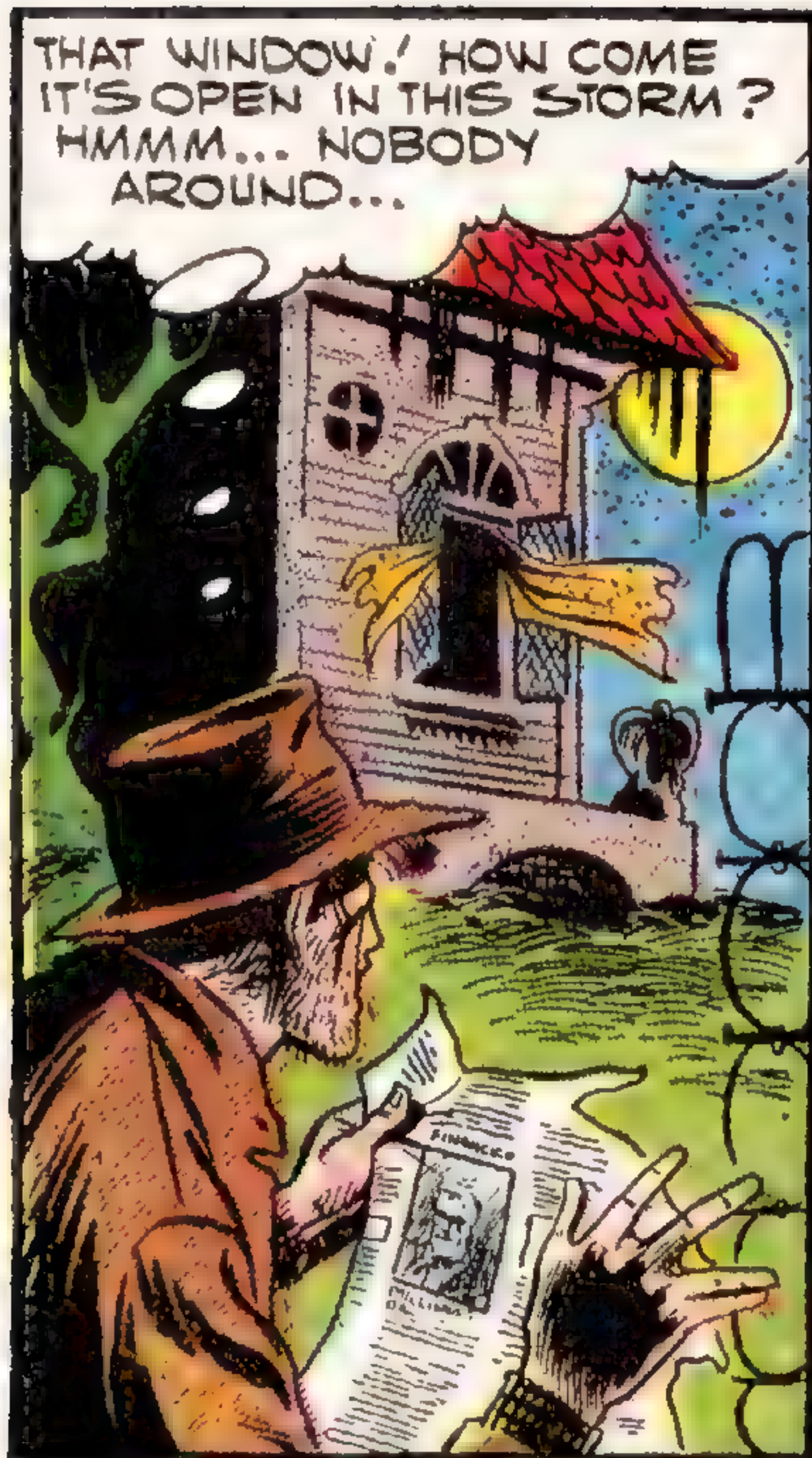
HMPF! LOOK AT HIM! HE WAS BORN WITH A SILVER SPOON IN HIS MOUTH! NO WONDER HE'S THE RICHEST MAN IN THE WORLD!

I NEVER HAD A CHANCE! NEVER HAD A LUCKY BREAK FROM THE MINUTE I WAS BORN!

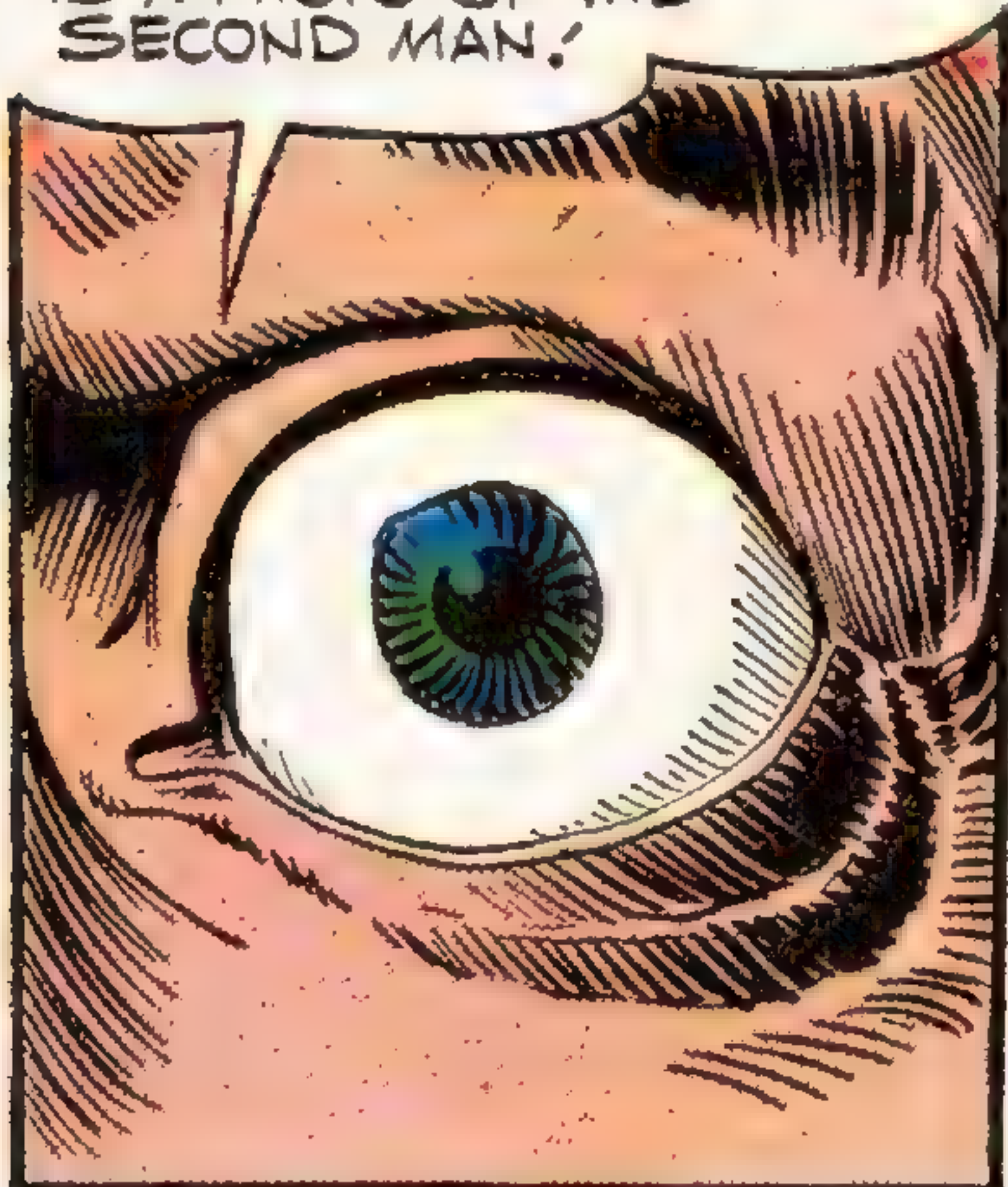
GUYS LIKE ME HAVE THREE STRIKES AGAINST US RIGHT FROM THE START! WE NEVER ...

GASP!

DITKO



ACCORDING TO THIS, THE GAD-
GET CAN TRANSFER ONE
MAN'S MIND INTO ANOTHER
MAN'S BODY. ALL YOU NEED
IS A PHOTO OF THE
SECOND MAN.



HERE'S MY CHANCE TO MAKE
UP FOR NOT BEING BORN
WITH A SILVER SPOON IN
MY MOUTH. AND I KNOW
JUST WHOSE PHOTO
TO USE.

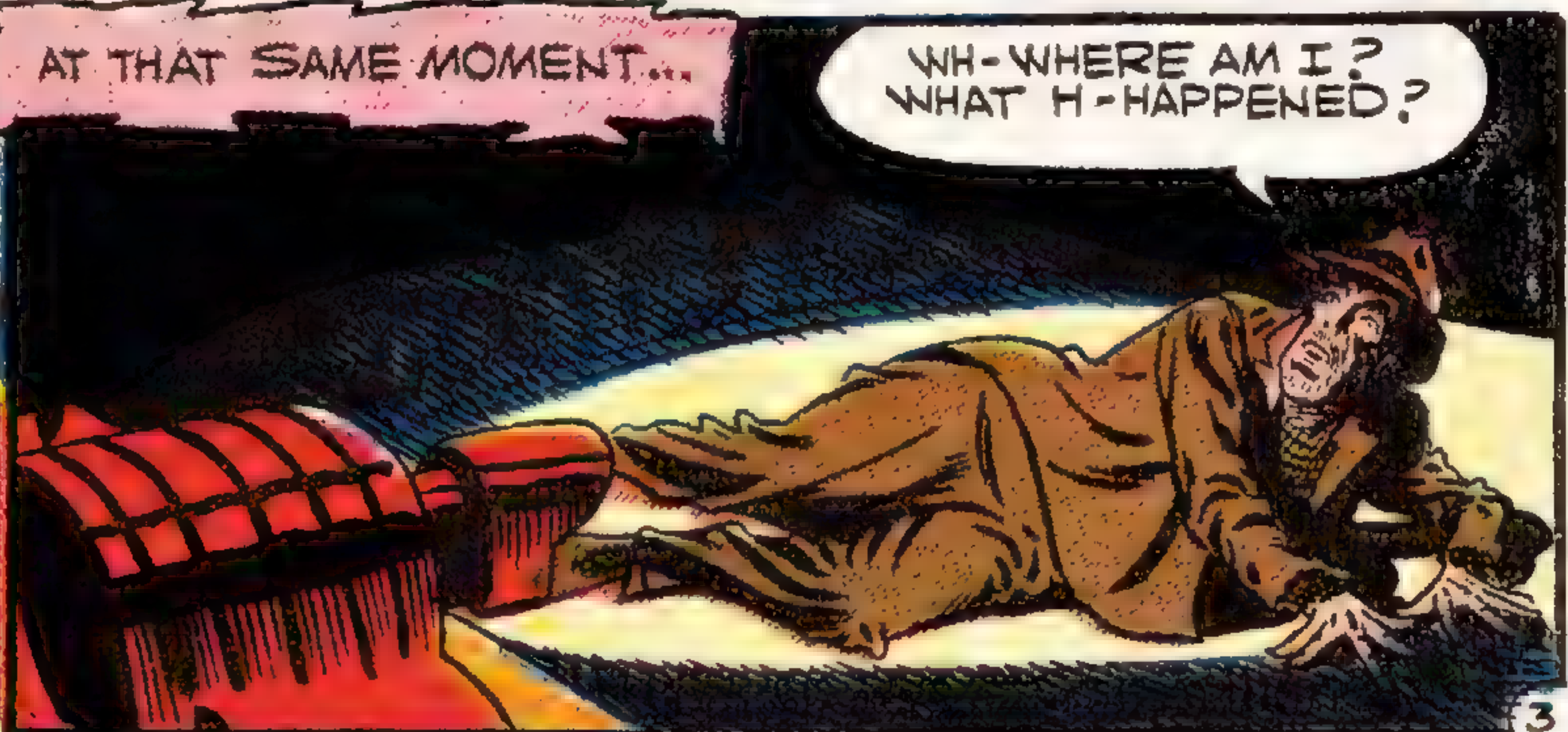


IT WORKED!
LOOK AT THIS
LAYOUT.



AT THAT SAME MOMENT...

WH-WHERE AM I?
WHAT H-HAPPENED?



THE WIND HAS SUBSIDED...
THE MORNING SUN SHINES
BRIGHTLY... AND HE WHO
HAD BEEN A DERELICT
ALL HIS LIFE, REVELS
NOW IN LUXURY THAT
CAN NEVER END.
FOR HAS HE NOT
CHANGED BODIES
WITH THE WEALTHIEST
MAN IN THE WORLD?



SIR, YOUR
CO-ORDINATORS
ARE HERE.'

WHAT CO-ORDINATORS?



Y-YOU MUST BE JOKING, SIR! YOU
ASKED THEM ALL TO COME HERE
TODAY WITH THEIR REPORTS.'



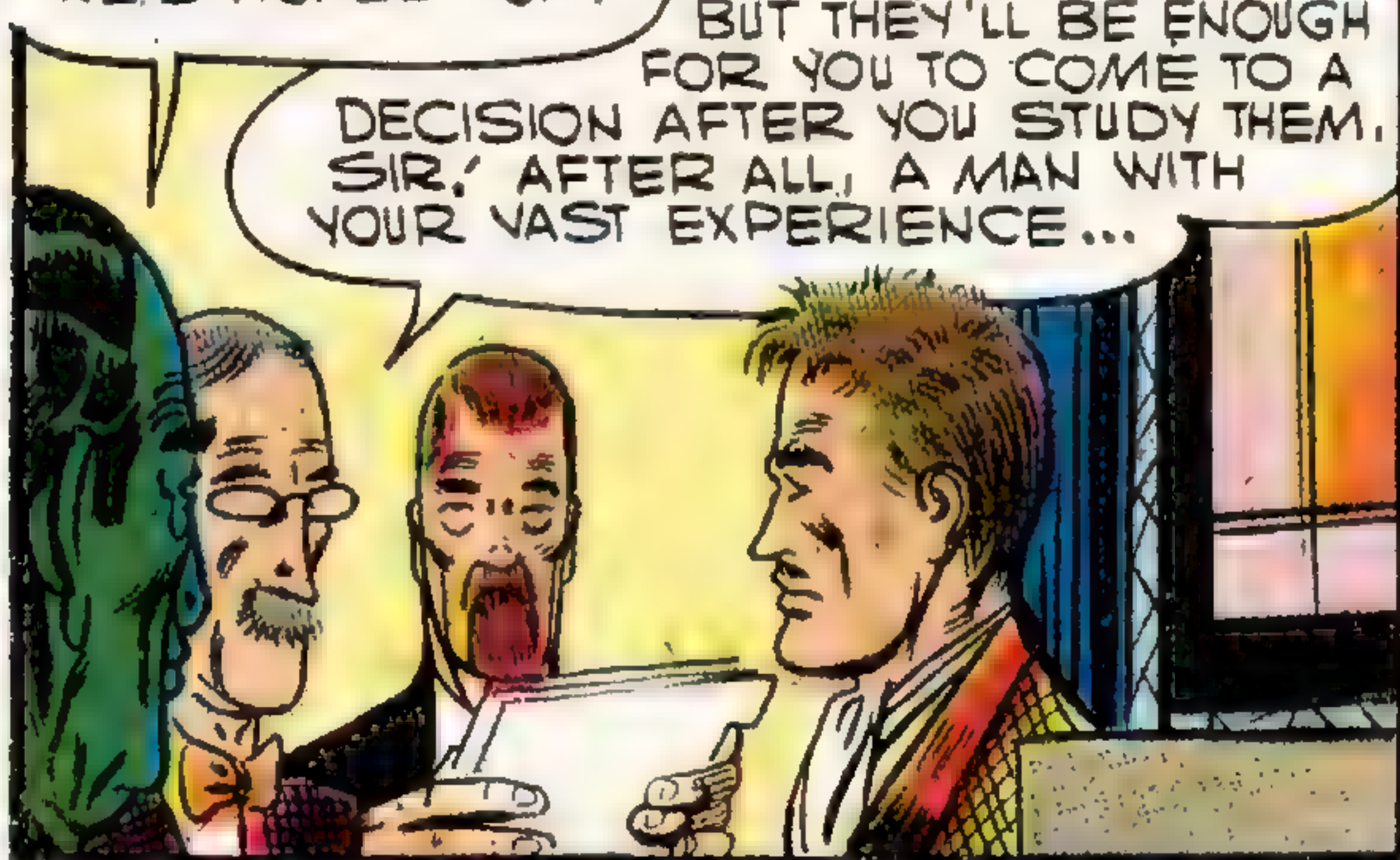
UH-OH, I GET IT! SOME BIG BUSINESS
DECISION COMING UP! I BETTER PLAY
ALONG...

SURE, I WAS JUST
JOKING! SEND
THEM IN.'

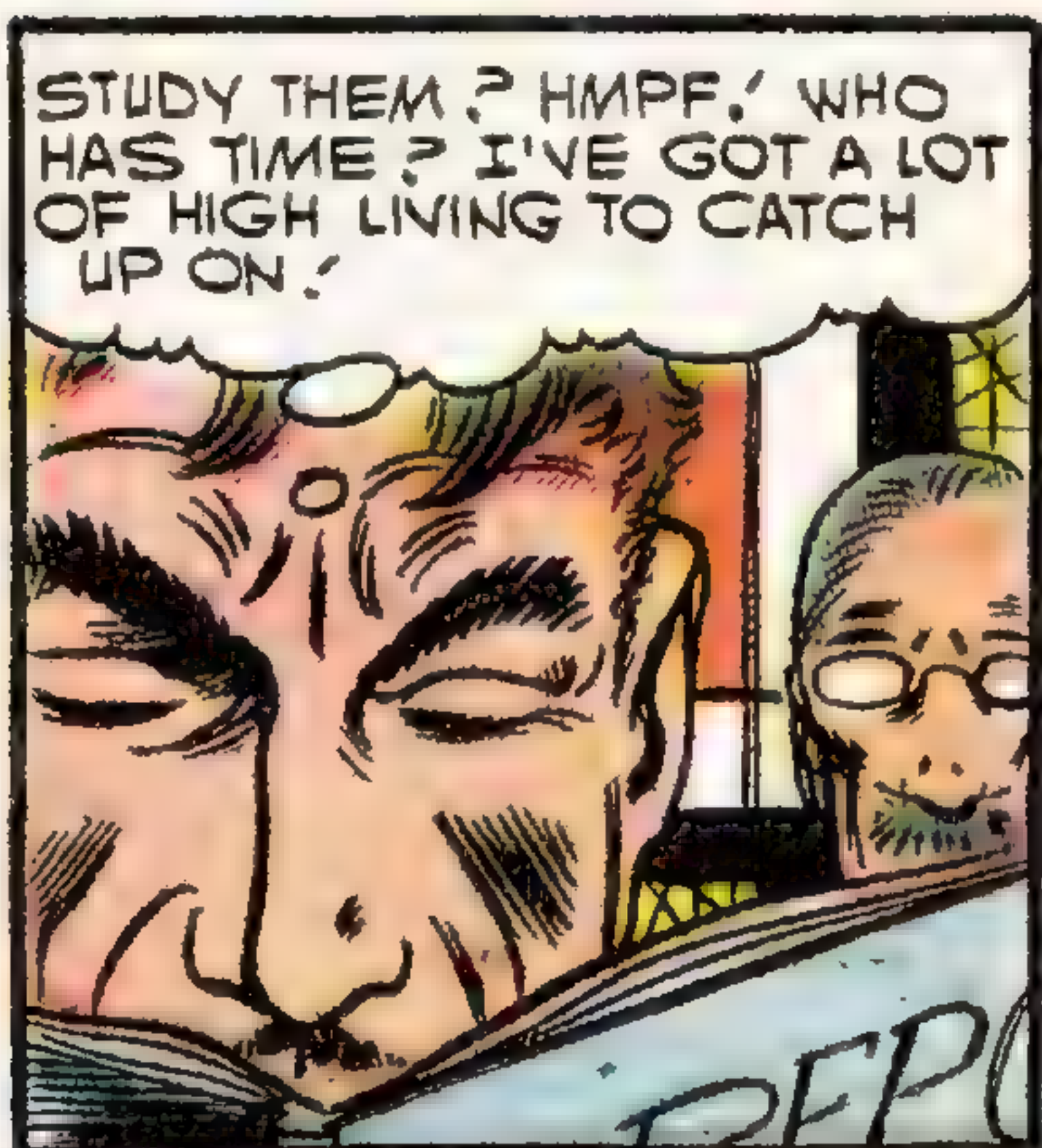


HERE ARE OUR REPORTS, SIR! WE TRIED
OUR BEST... BUT THE WAY THE MARKET'S
BEEN FLUCTUATING LATELY, THEY'RE NOT AS
CONCLUSIVE AS
WE'D HOPED FOR.'

BUT THEY'LL BE ENOUGH
FOR YOU TO COME TO A
DECISION AFTER YOU STUDY THEM,
SIR! AFTER ALL, A MAN WITH
YOUR VAST EXPERIENCE...



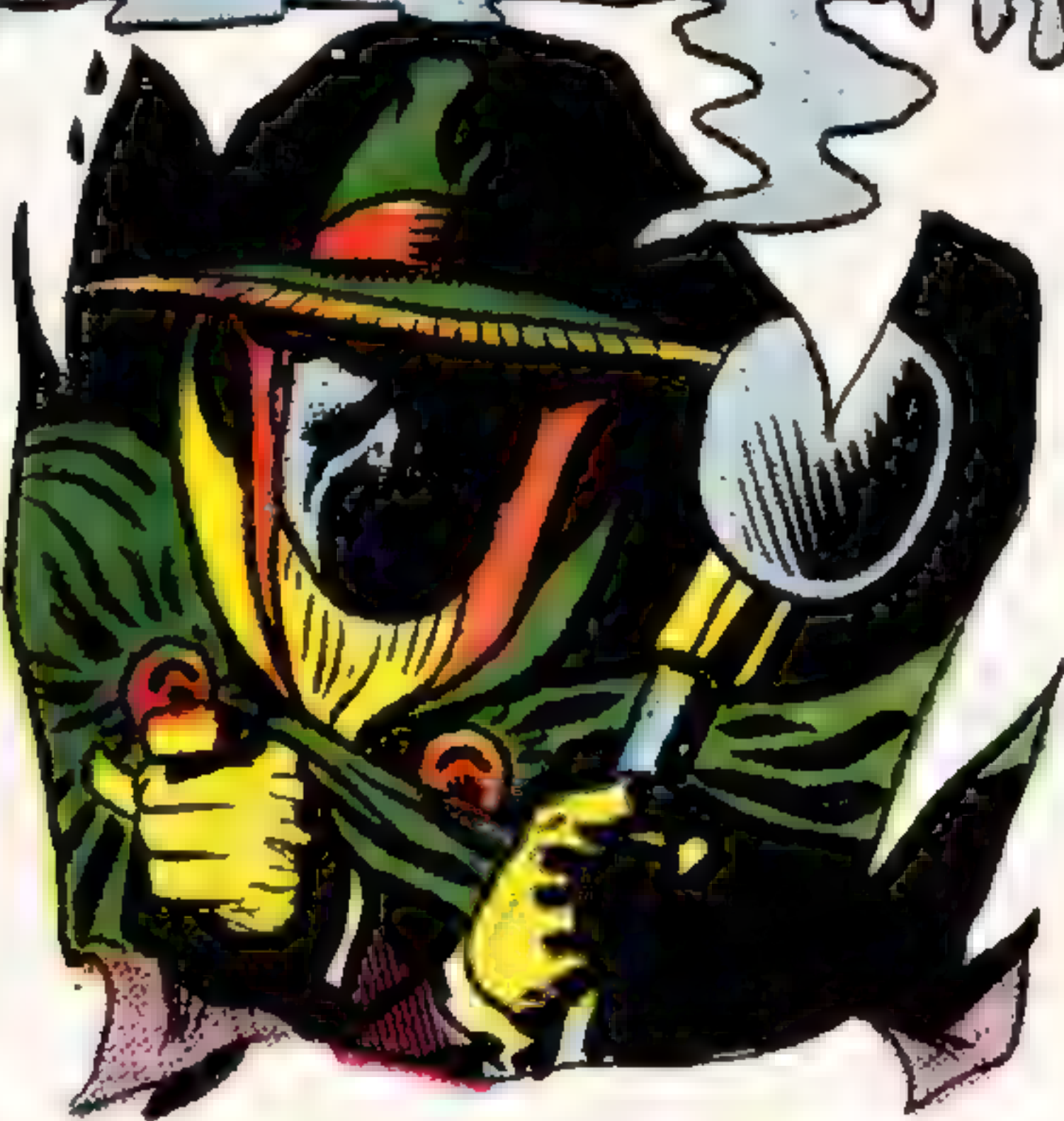
STUDY THEM? HMPF! WHO
HAS TIME? I'VE GOT A LOT
OF HIGH LIVING TO CATCH
UP ON.'



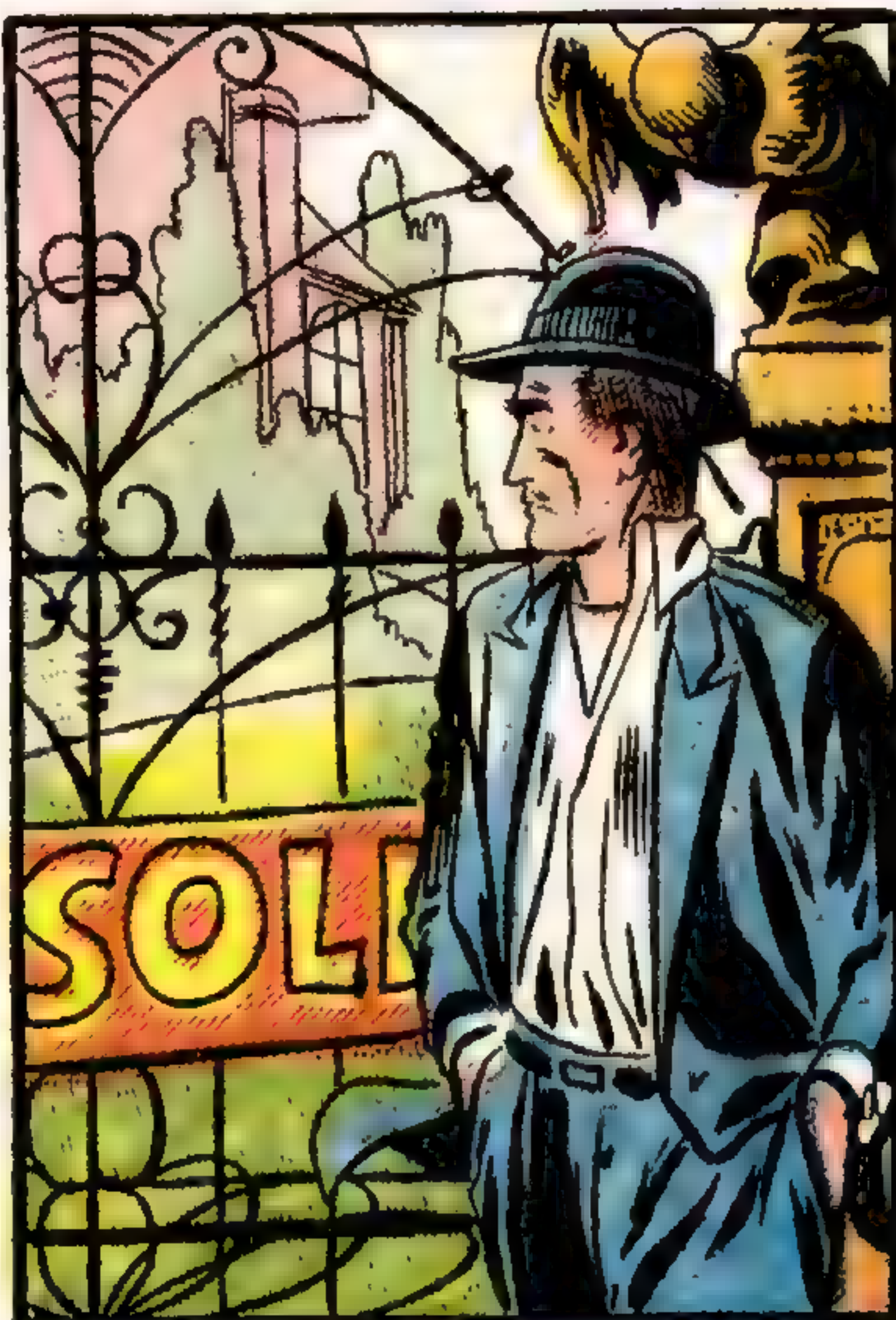
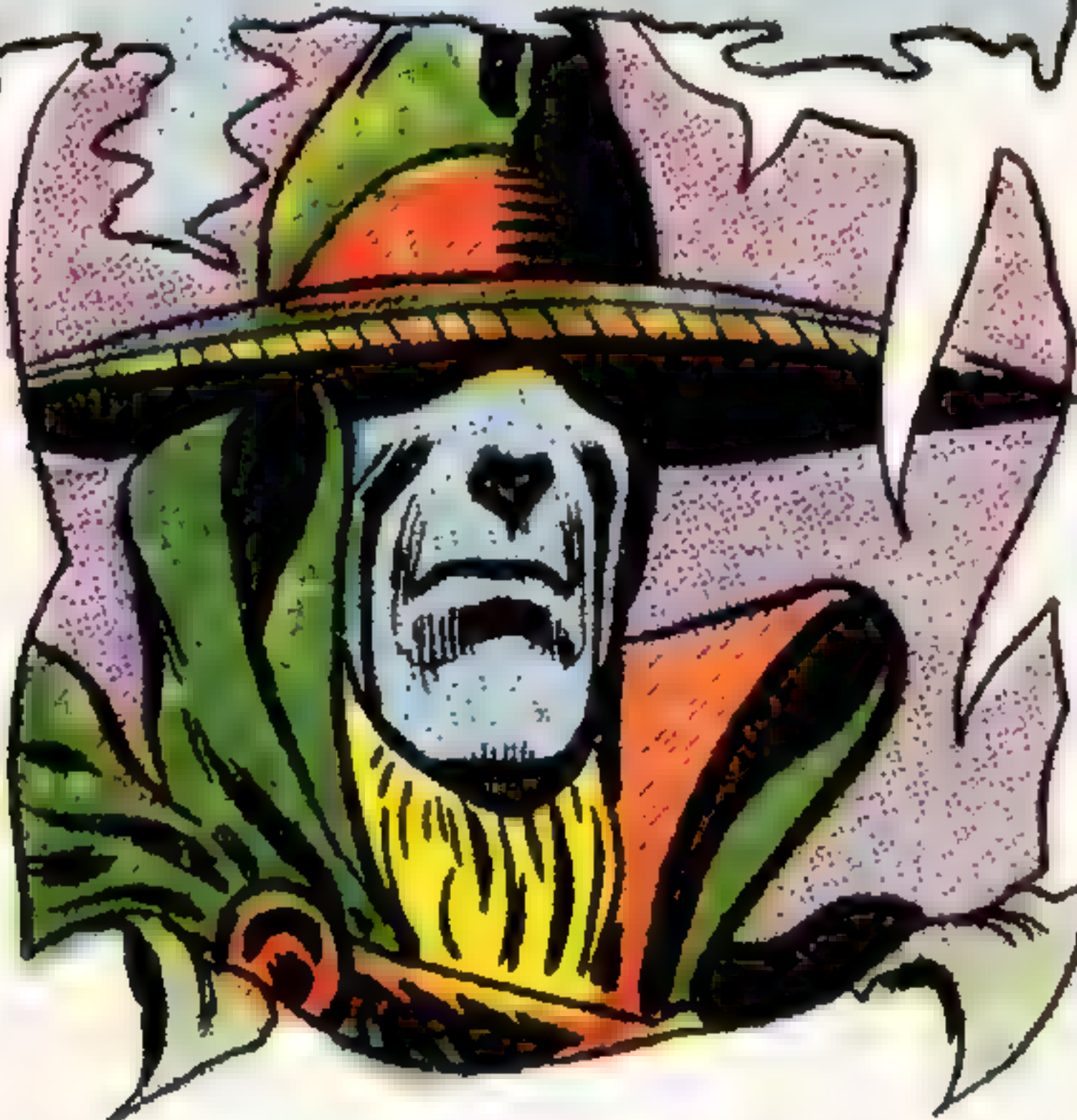
THESE LOOK OKAY TO ME!
GO AHEAD WITH WHATEVER
YOU GUYS THINK BEST.'



AND SO IT GOES, ONE EVA-
SION OF RESPONSIBILITY
AFTER ANOTHER, SEVEN
DAYS A WEEK... AND AN
ENDLESS BOUT OF RECK-
LESS SPENDING SEVEN
NIGHTS A WEEK...

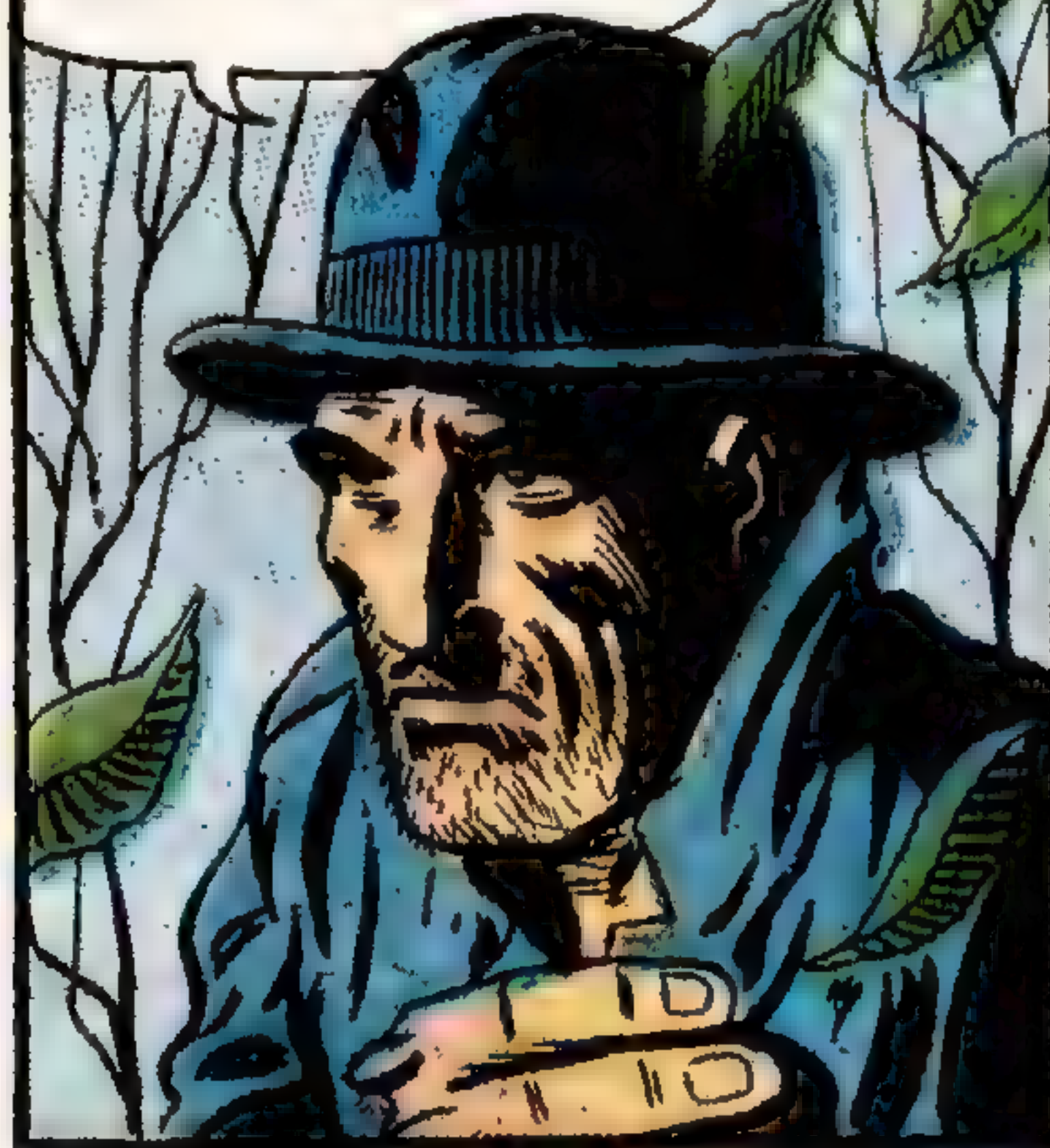


THE OUTCOME IS INEVITABLE!
IN LESS THAN FIVE YEARS,
THE VAST FINANCIAL EMPIRE
THAT HE INHERITED SO
STRANGELY TOPPLES INTO
NOTHINGNESS. HE IS
PENNYLESS AGAIN... DES-
PITE HIS NEW BODY...



A DERELICT AGAIN... DESPITE
HIS NEW BODY...

BRR...THE WIND'S
COLD TONIGHT!



IT'S ALWAYS COLD...
(SIGH) DOWN HERE
AT THE BOTTOM
OF THE LADDER!



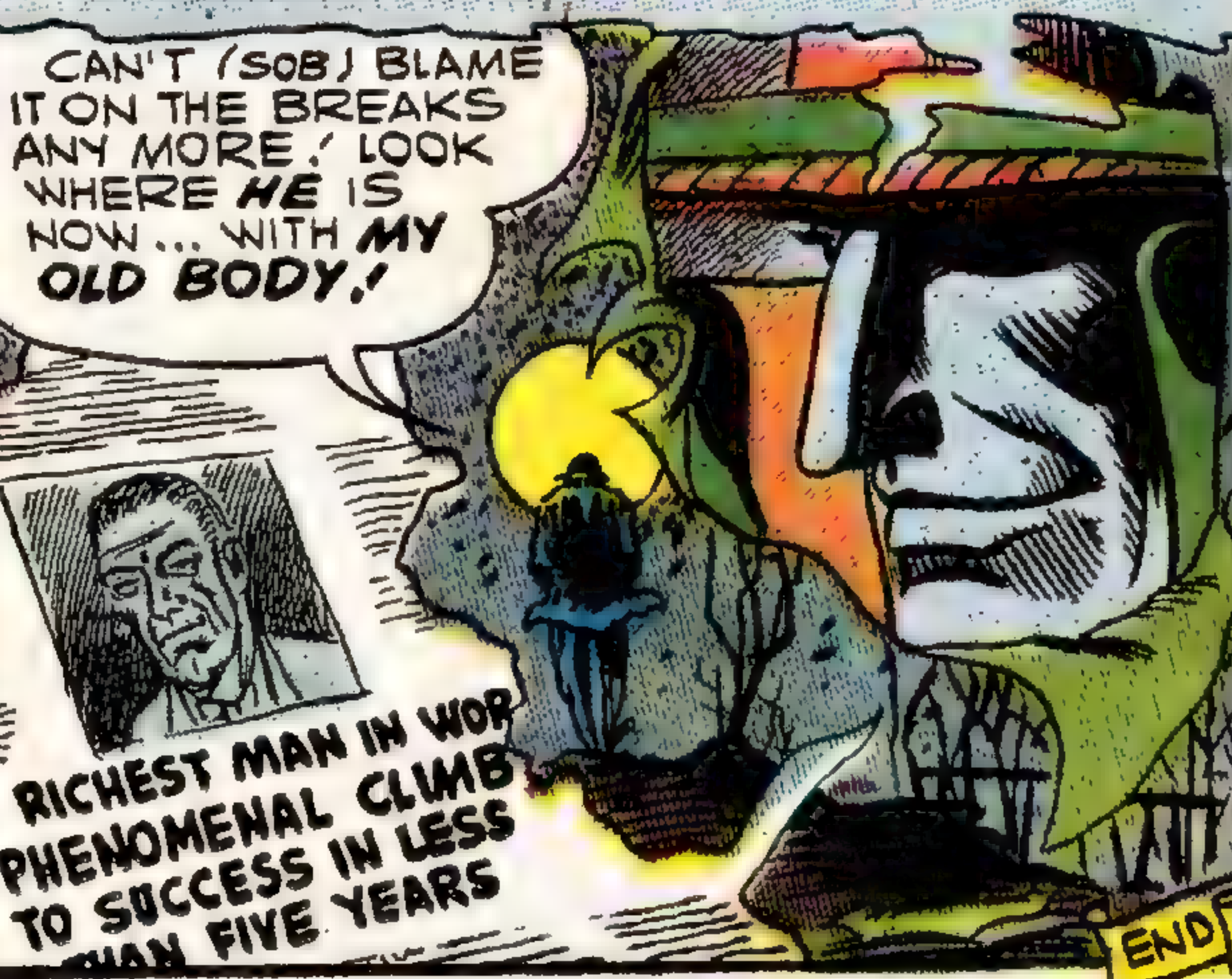
HMPF... LOOK
AT HIM...



THE WIND SHRIEKS TONIGHT LIKE A WAILING
BANSHEE FOR ALL TO HEAR. BUT ONLY DR.
HAUNT CAN HEAR THE SOUNDLESS WAIL IN
THE DERELICT'S HEART!

CAN'T (SOB) BLAME
IT ON THE BREAKS
ANY MORE. LOOK
WHERE HE IS
NOW... WITH MY
OLD BODY!

RICHEST MAN IN WOR
PHENOMENAL CLIMB
TO SUCCESS IN LESS
THAN FIVE YEARS



END

THIS MAGAZINE ^{IS} HAUNTED

YOU HAVE SEEN ME, YOU MISTOOK ME FOR A FURTIVE BLOB OF DARKNESS, STRANGELY DARKER THAN THE OTHER SHADOWS, AND FOR A SPLIT-SECOND YOU FOUND YOURSELF STARING PUZZLEDLY, BUT THEN THE FORM QUICKLY FADED... AND YOU FORGOT. YOU HAVE HEARD ME, TOO, BUT ONLY DIMLY, IN THE GUISE OF SOBBING WIND OR A FAINT FARAWAY SHRIEK...



Ditko-

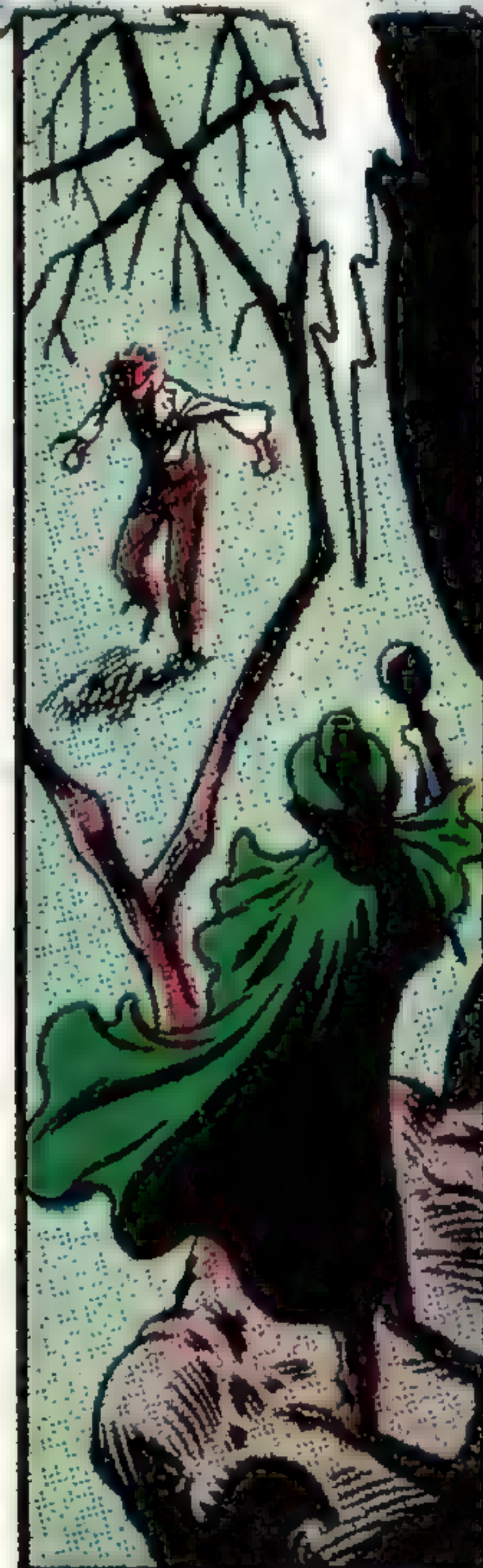
S2261

WELL, NOW YOU SHALL HEAR DR. HAUNT CLEARLY AS I TELL MY BLOOD-CHILLING TALES. AND MY FIRST TALE IS OF A MAN HAUNTED BY AN UNQUENCHABLE FIRE WITHIN HIM. I CALL IT...

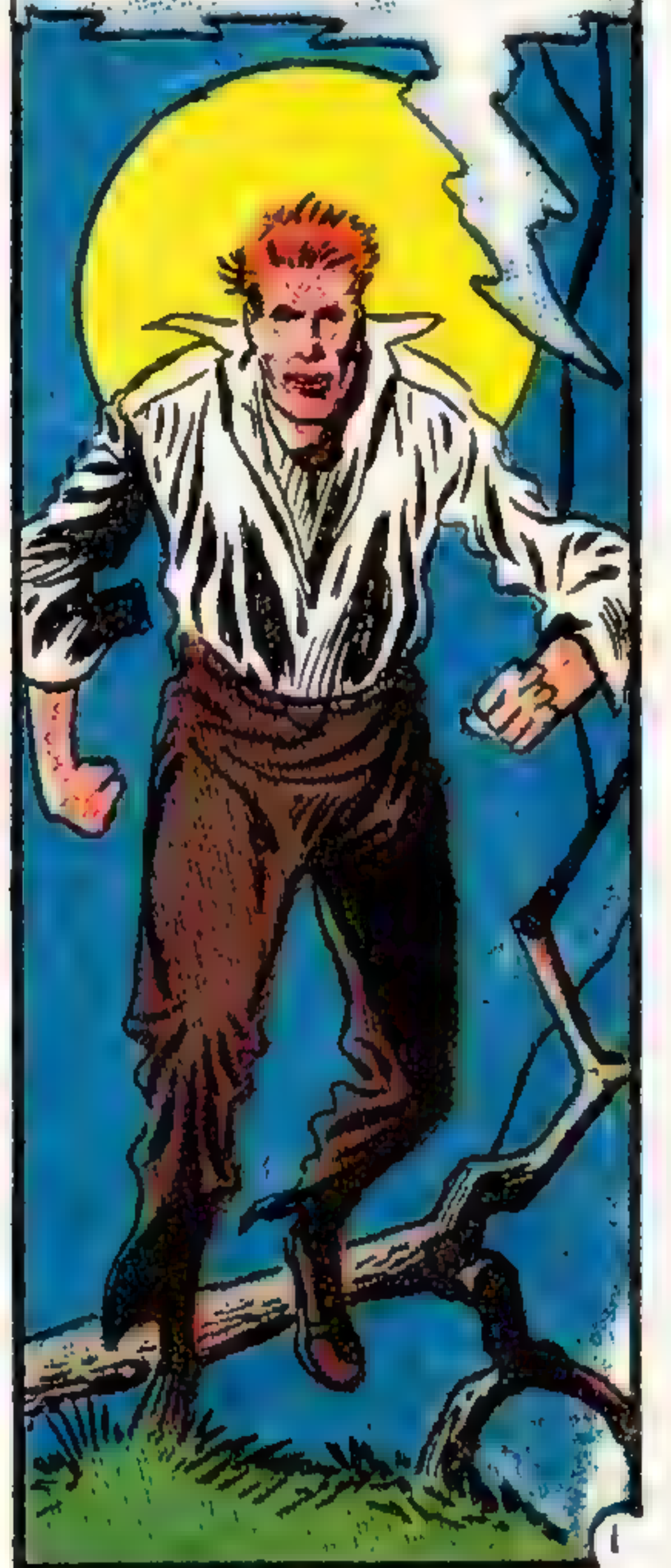
'HE SHALL HAVE VENGEANCE'



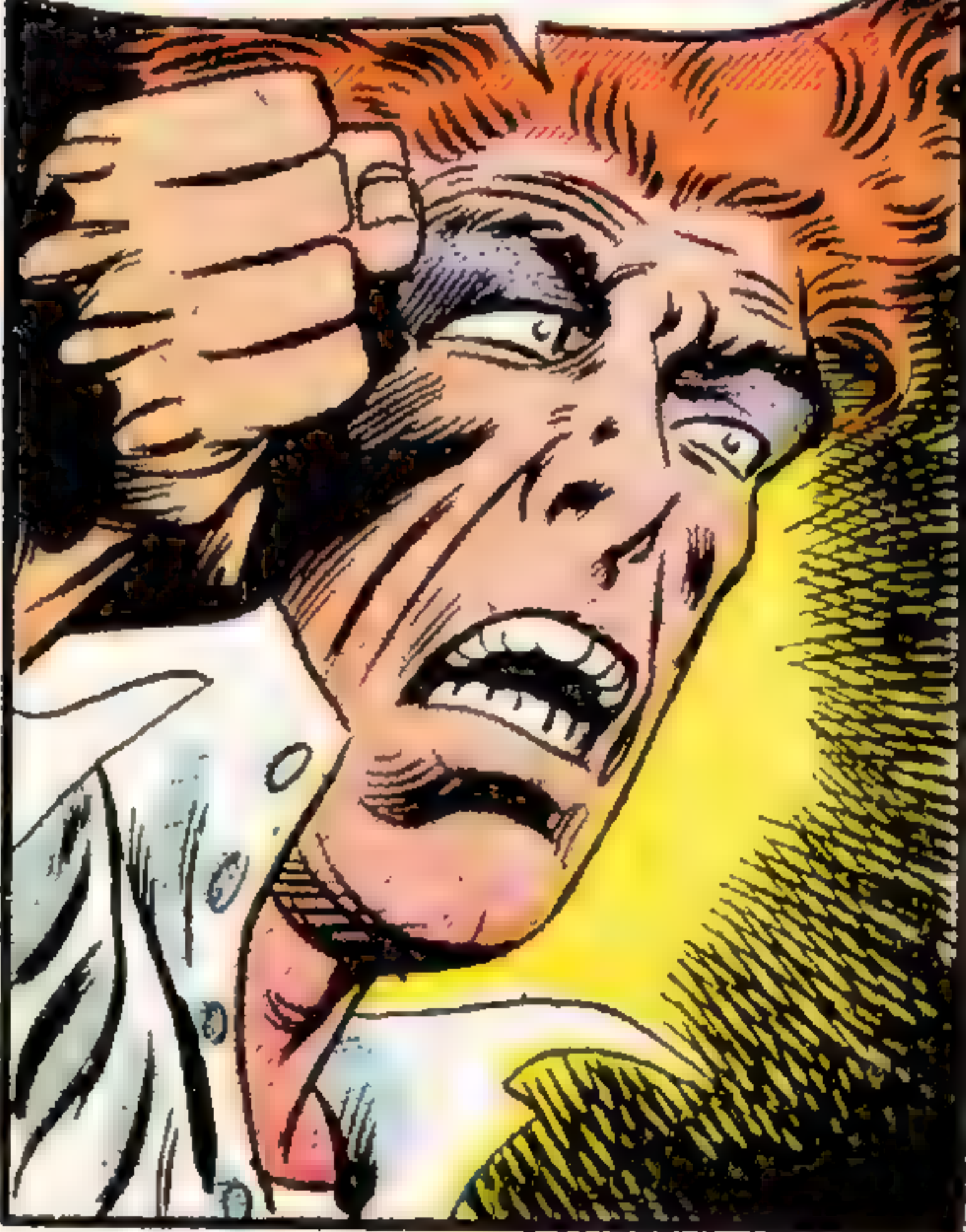
BEHOLD HIM STRIDING THROUGH THE NIGHT...



HIS MOUTH A THIN TWISTING LINE THAT SPELLS A TERRIBLE RAGE... HIS HANDS SWINGING CHOPPLY, CLENCHED INTO JAGGED FISTS...



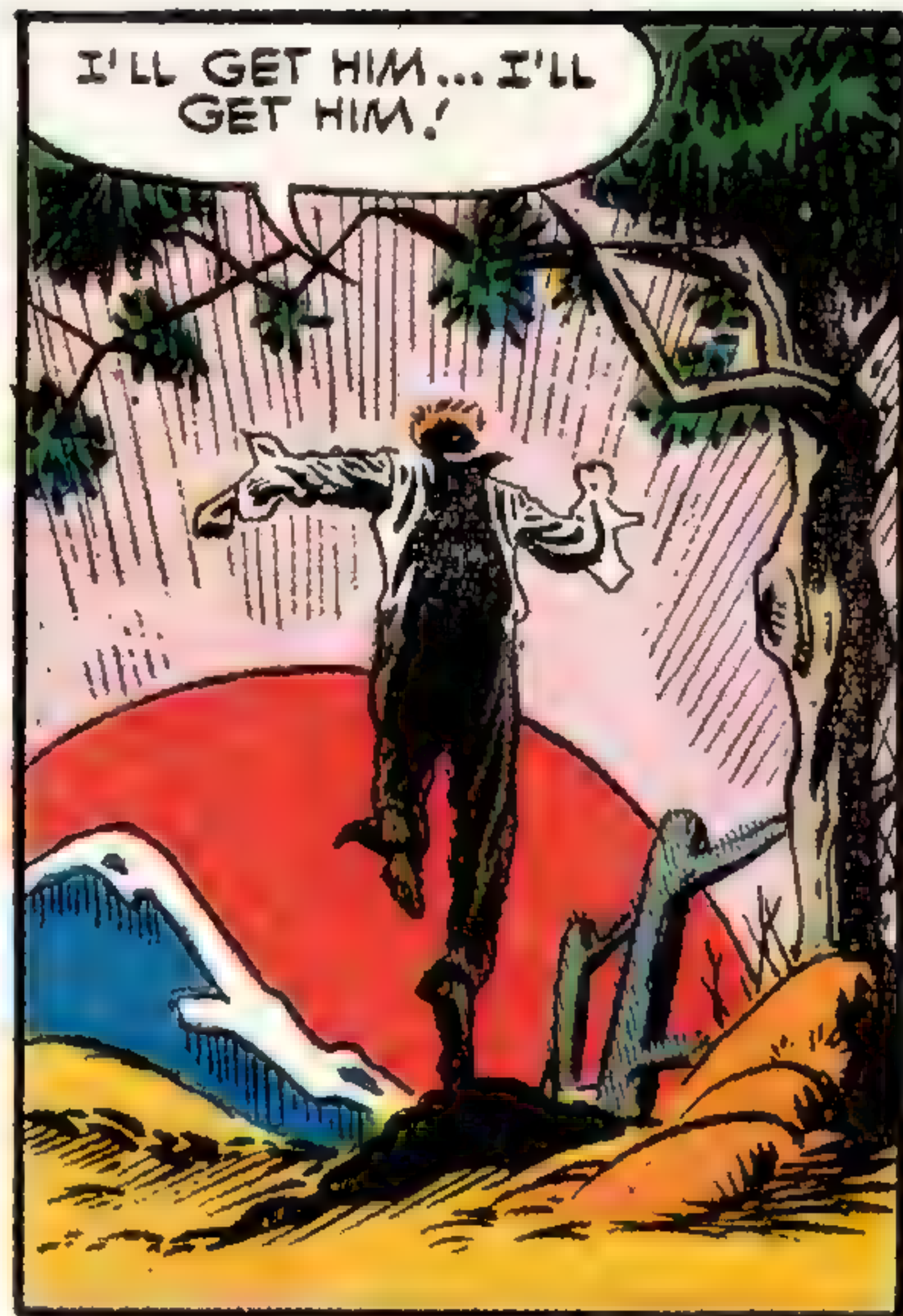
I'LL GET HIM, I'LL GET WHO-
EVER KILLED PHIL... IF IT'S
THE LAST THING I DO!



THE DAWN HAS JUST BEGUN
TO SPLINTER NIGHT'S DARK-
NESS WITH NARROW STREAKS
OF GREY, BUT HIS HEART
REMAINS COAL-BLACK WITH
RAGE...

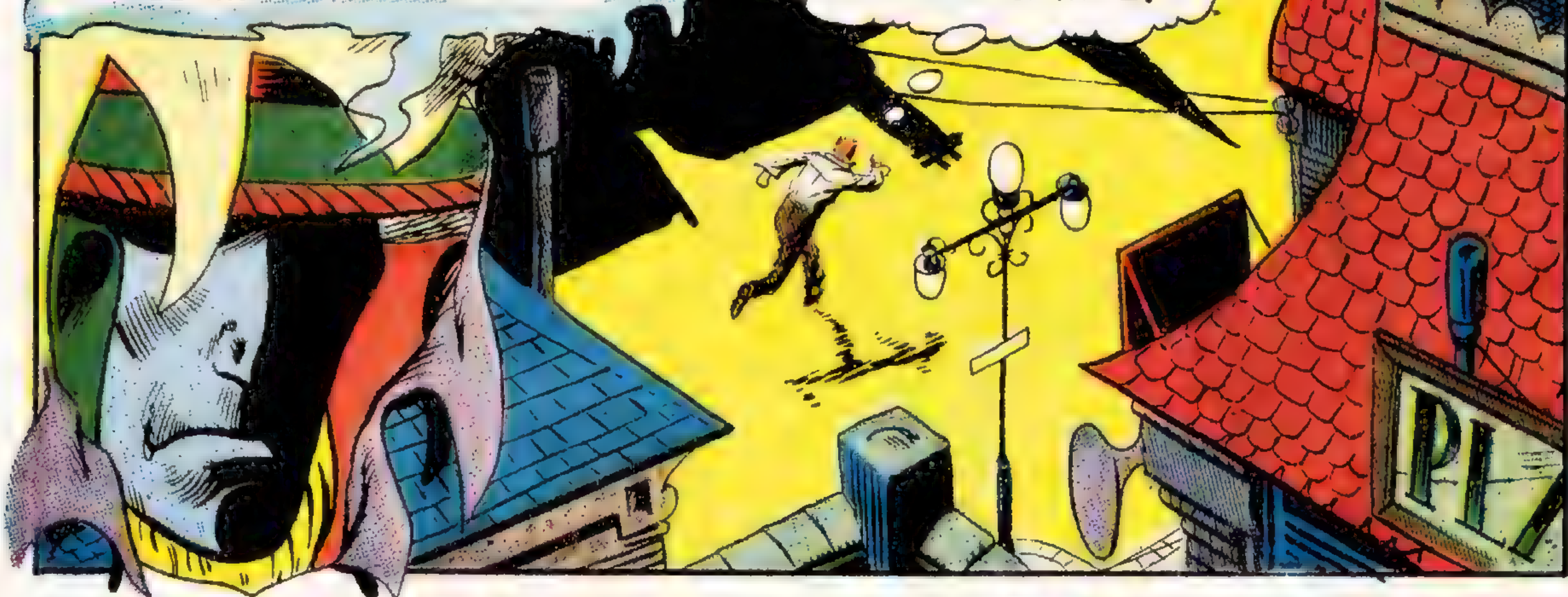


I'LL GET HIM... I'LL
GET HIM!



AND NOW, WITH MORNING BREAKING ALL
ABOUT HIM, HE ENTERS PLAINVILLE AT
LAST! PLAINVILLE, THE TOWN THAT WAS
HIS HOME BEFORE THE TERRIBLE
TRAGEDY...

EVERYBODY'S STILL ASLEEP! EVERY-
BODY EXCEPT GUS OVER AT THE
RAILROAD STATION! GUS WILL
TALK! HE WAS ALWAYS
A FRIEND OF MINE!



GUS! BE WITH YOU IN A
MINUTE!



GUS, YOU HAVE TO
ANSWER MY QUESTIONS!
YOU HAVE TO HELP
ME, GUS!

BE
GLAD TO...

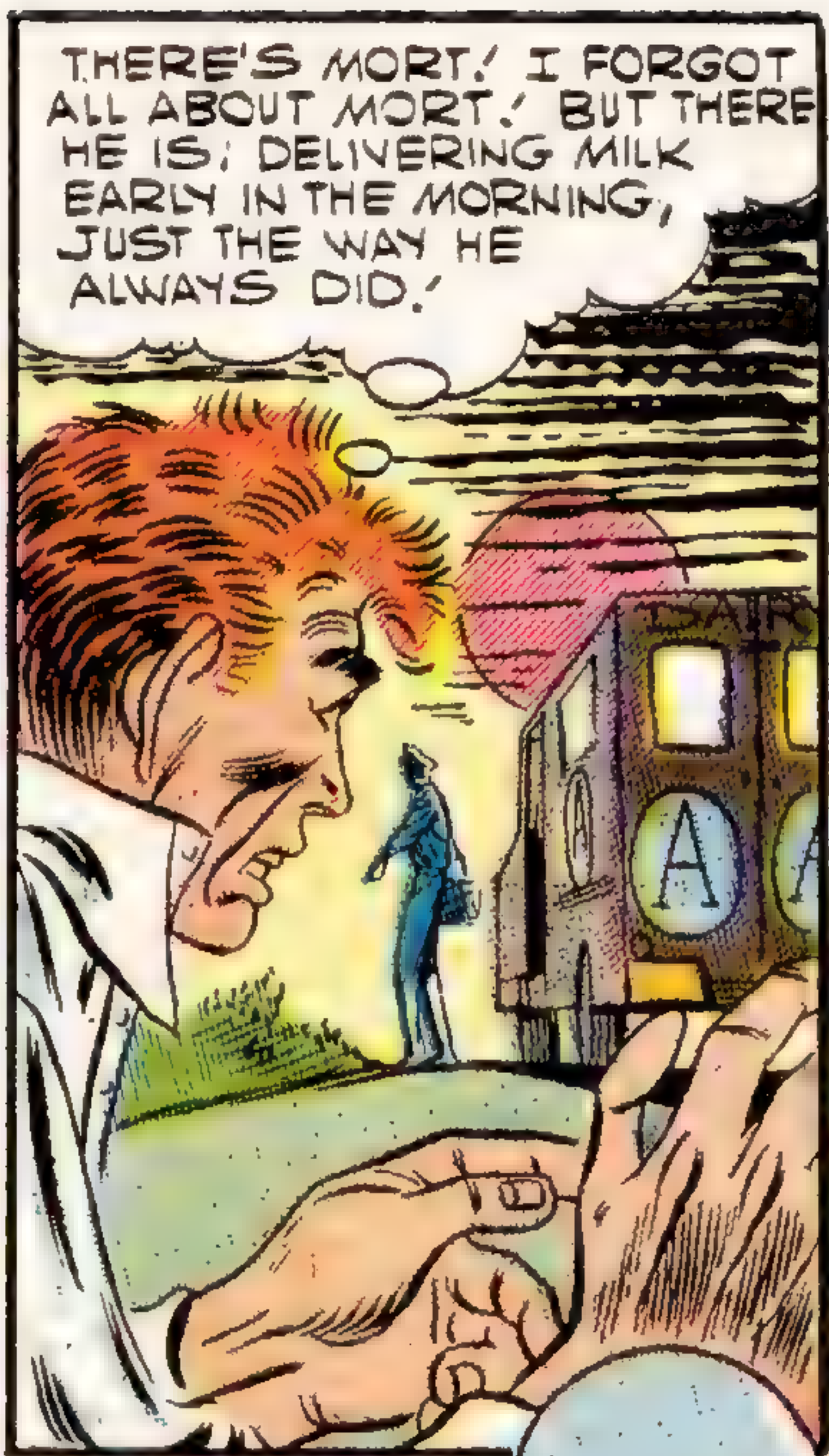


DAVE! NO! NO!





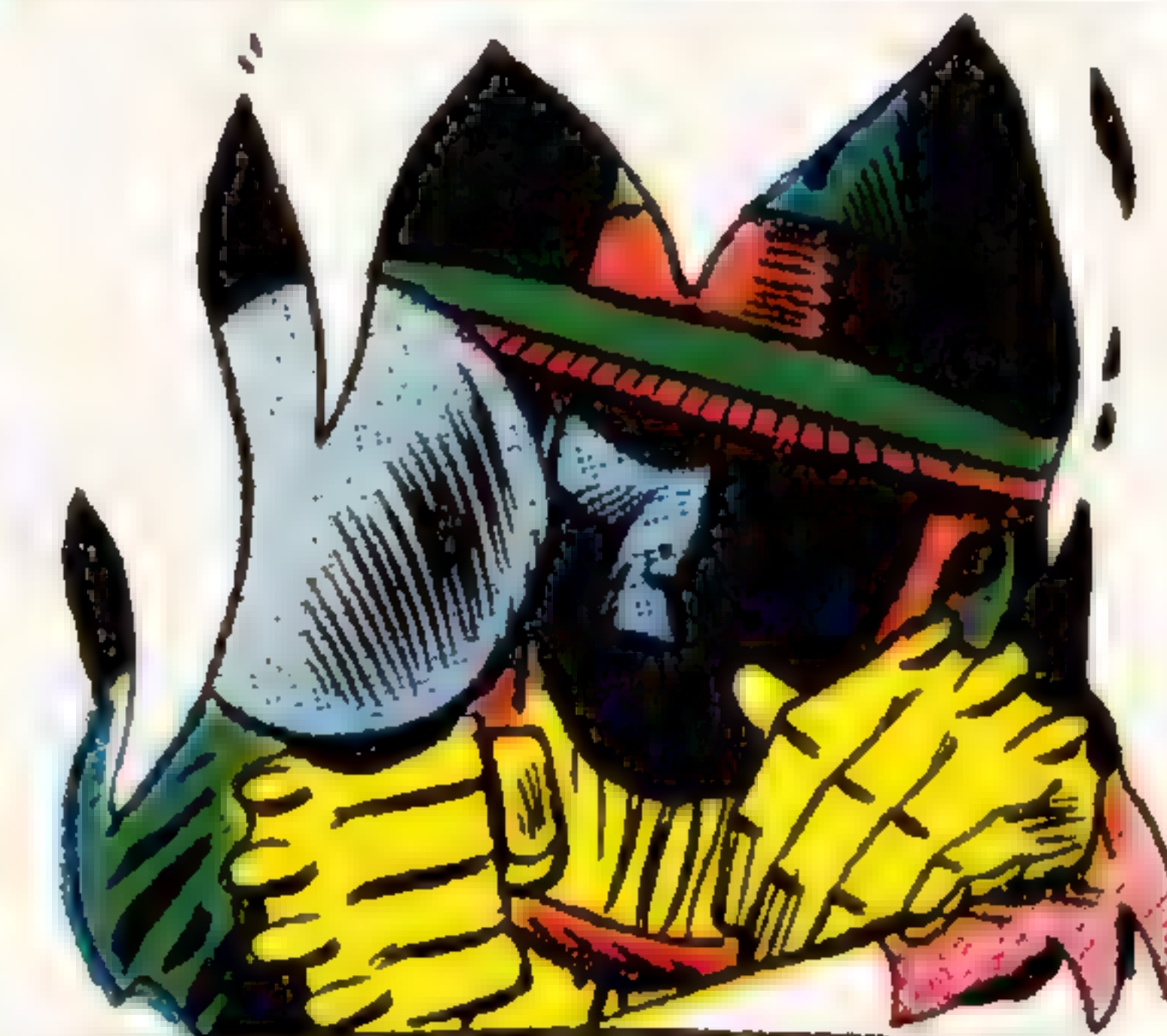
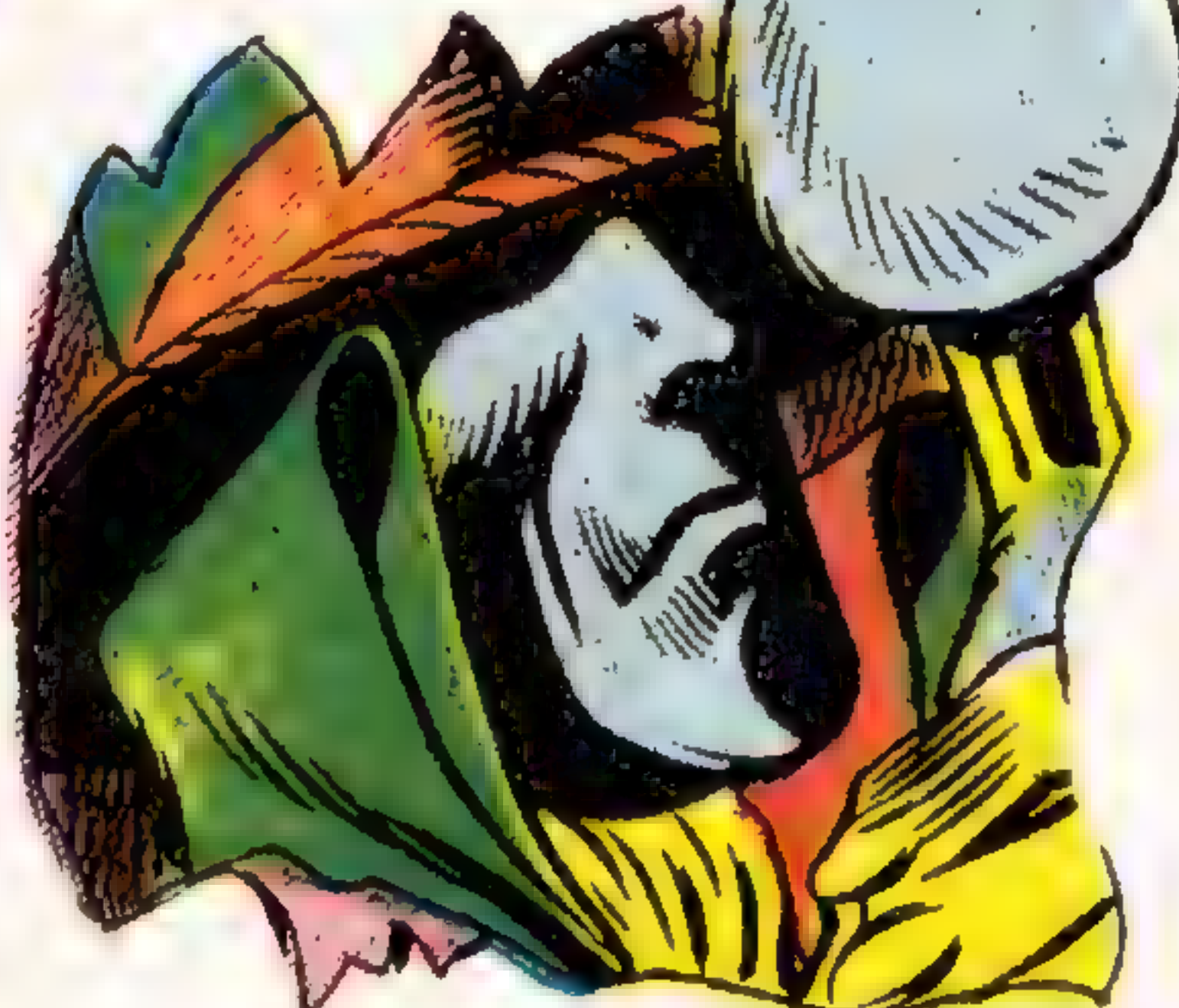
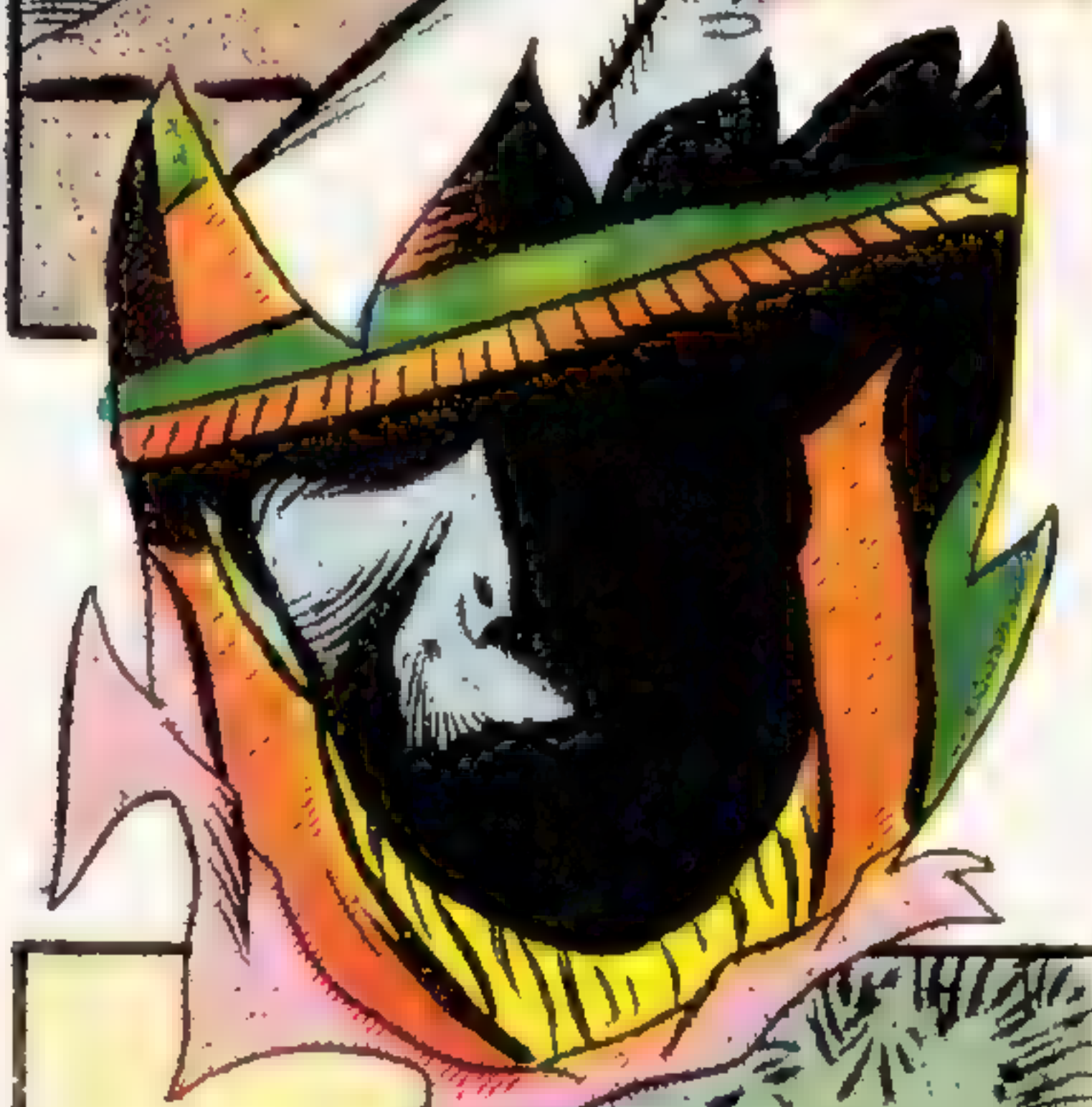
GUS KNOWS WHO KILLED PHIL! HE'S COVERING UP FOR SOMEBODY. THAT'S WHY HE RAN AWAY. NO USE CHASING HIM! BEEN WALKING TOO LONG WITHOUT FOOD. COULDN'T RUN FAST ENOUGH TO CATCH HIM.



THERE'S MORT! I FORGOT ALL ABOUT MORT. BUT THERE HE IS! DELIVERING MILK EARLY IN THE MORNING, JUST THE WAY HE ALWAYS DID.



I'M NOT TAKING ANY CHANCES ON MORT RUNNING AWAY. I'LL SNEAK UP ON HIM... GRAB HIM.



MORT!

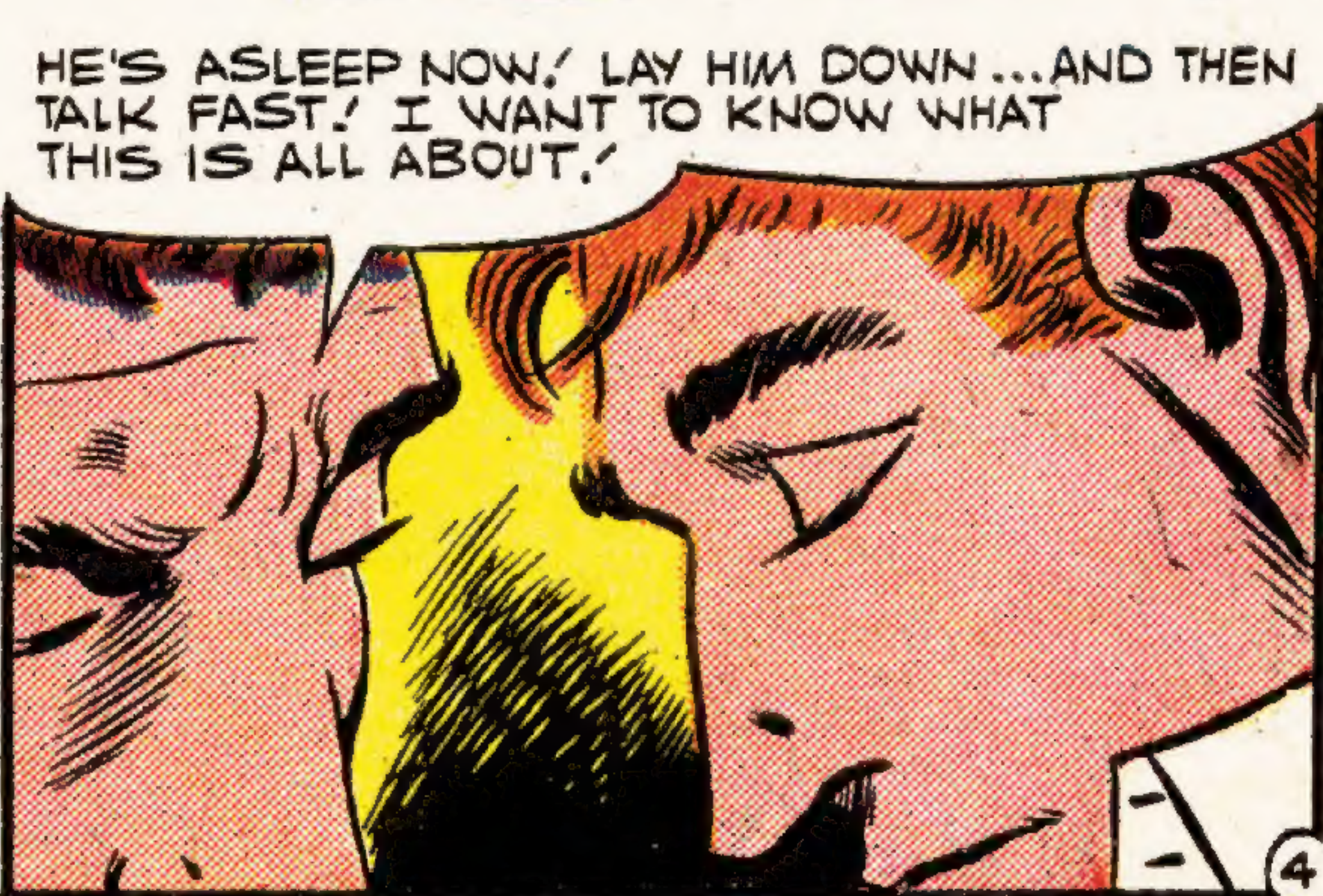
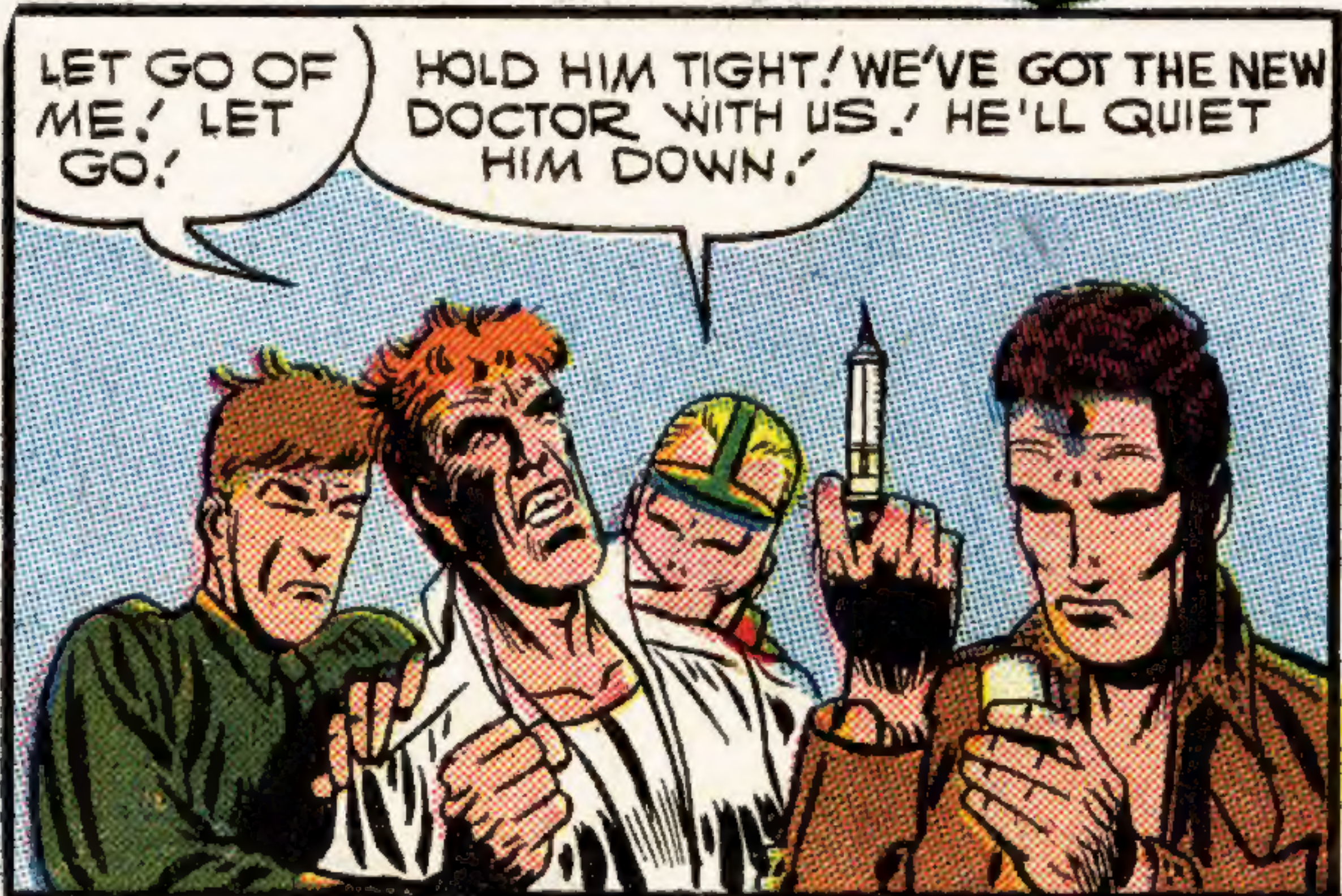
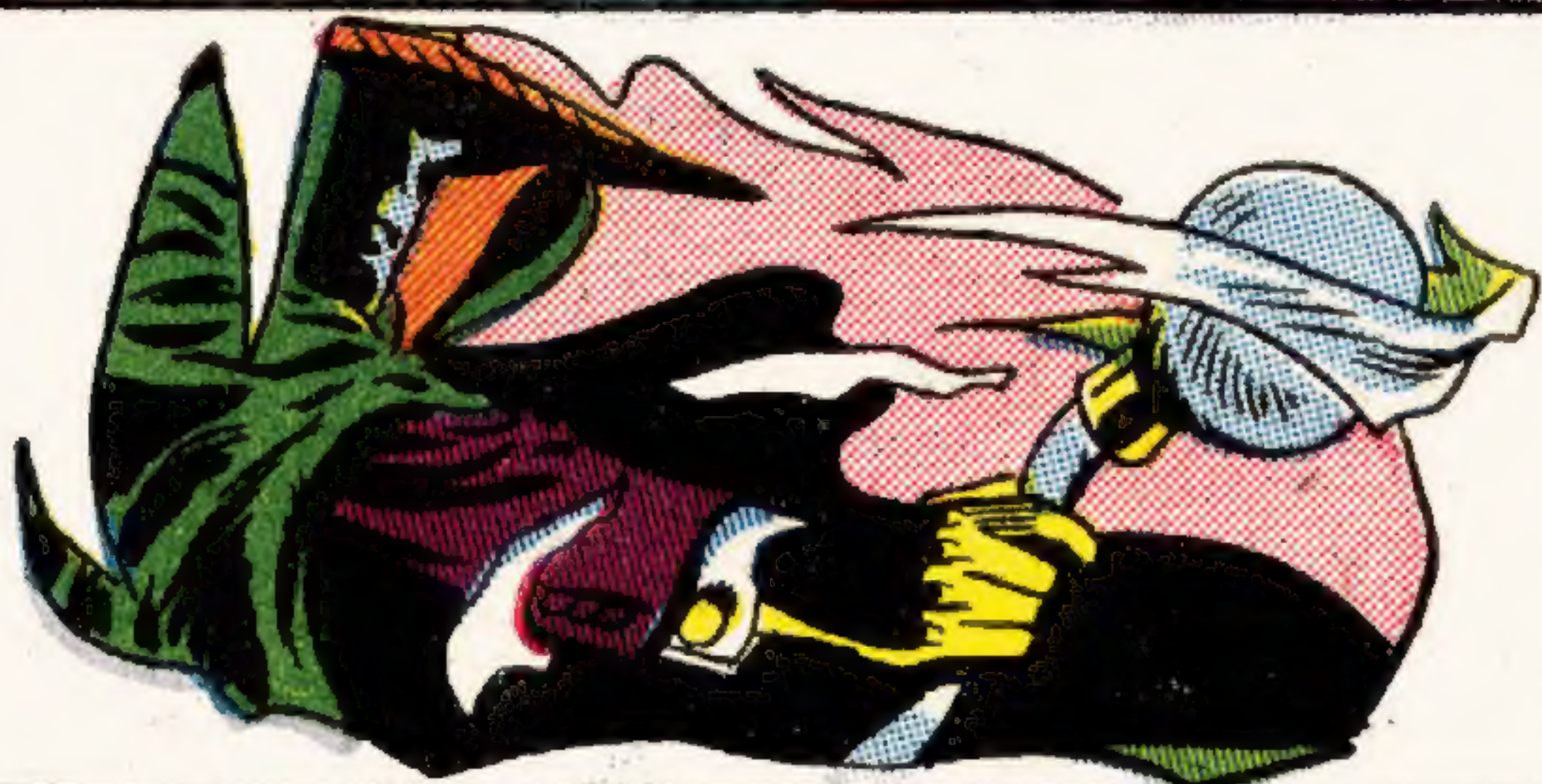
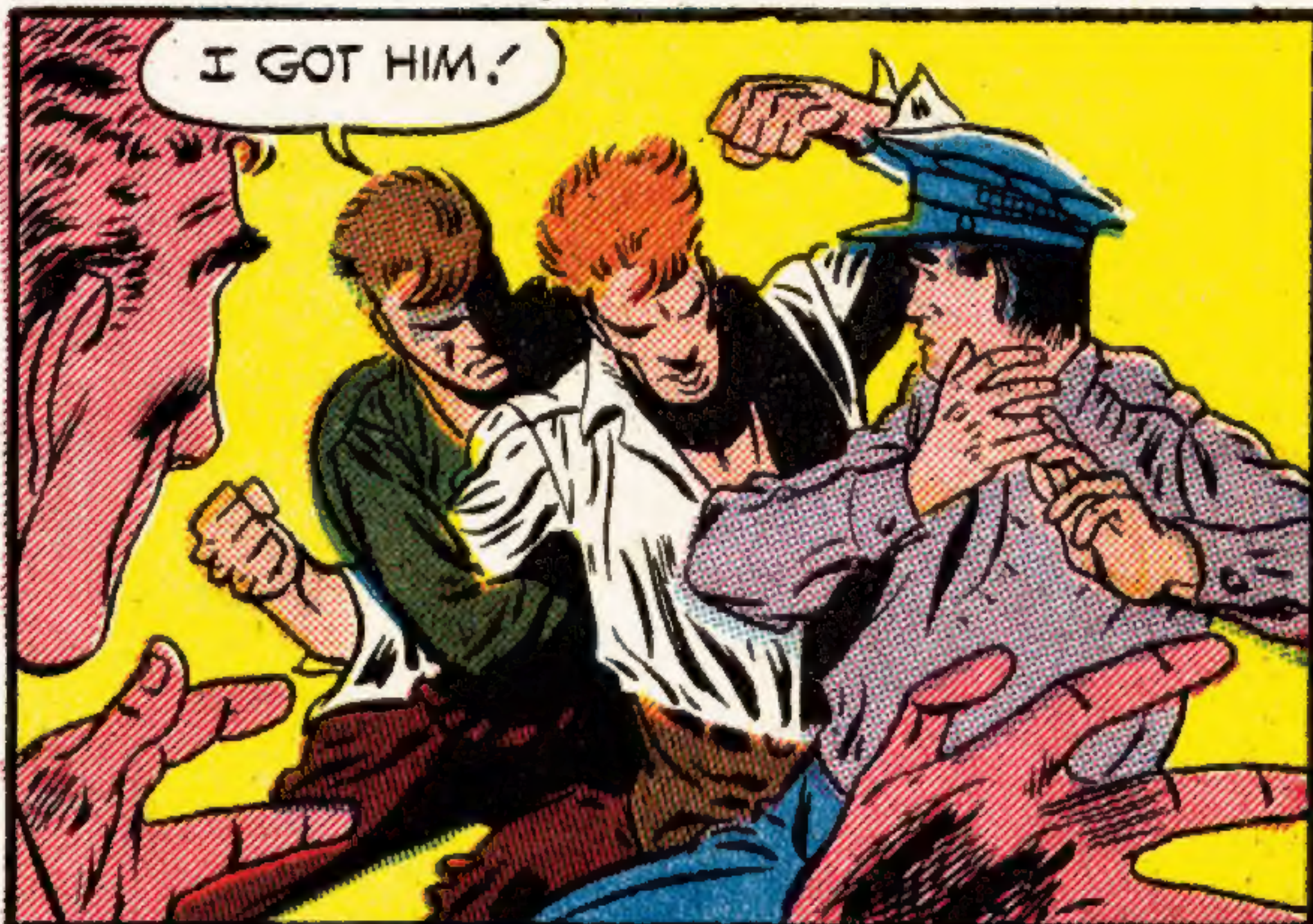
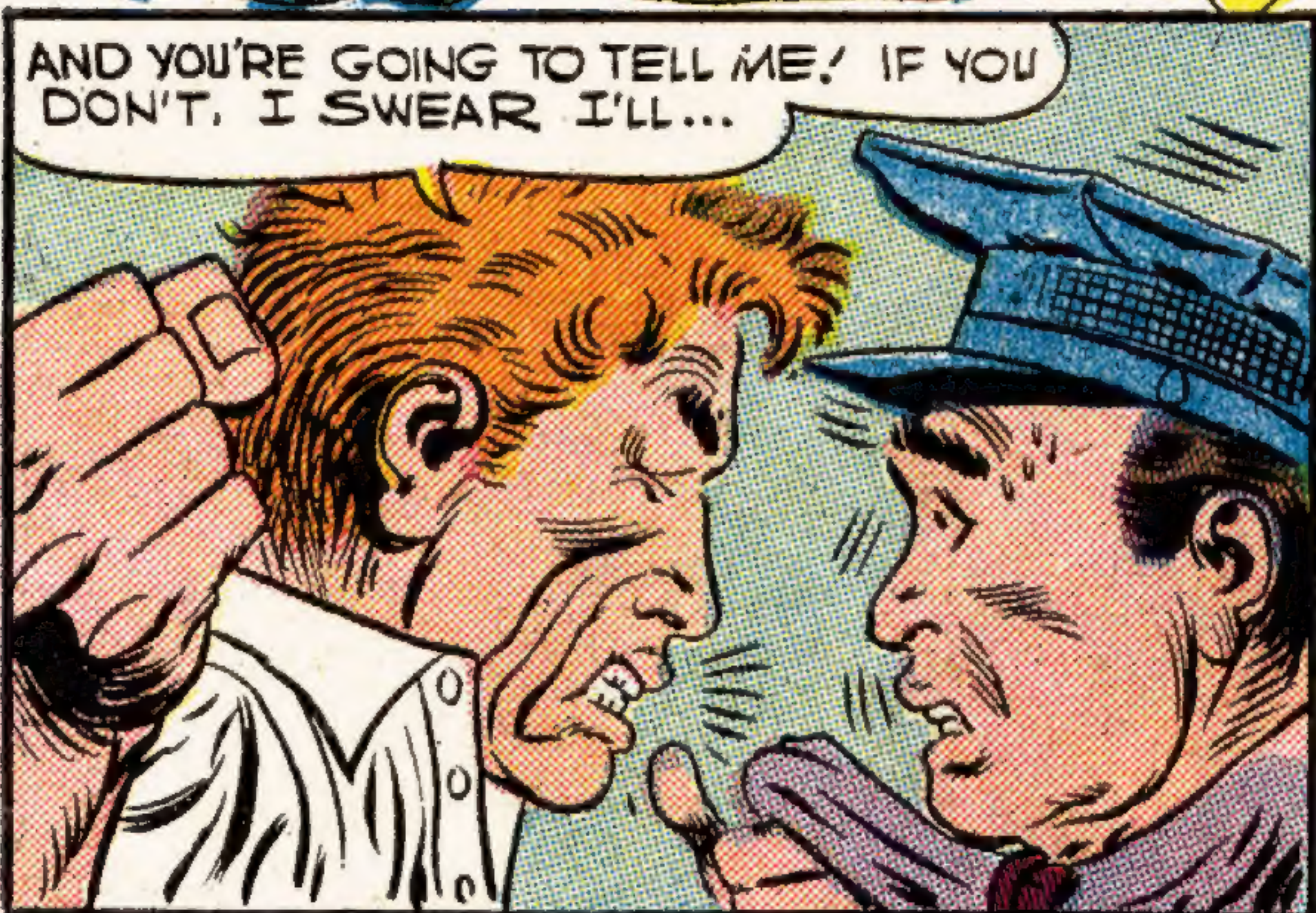
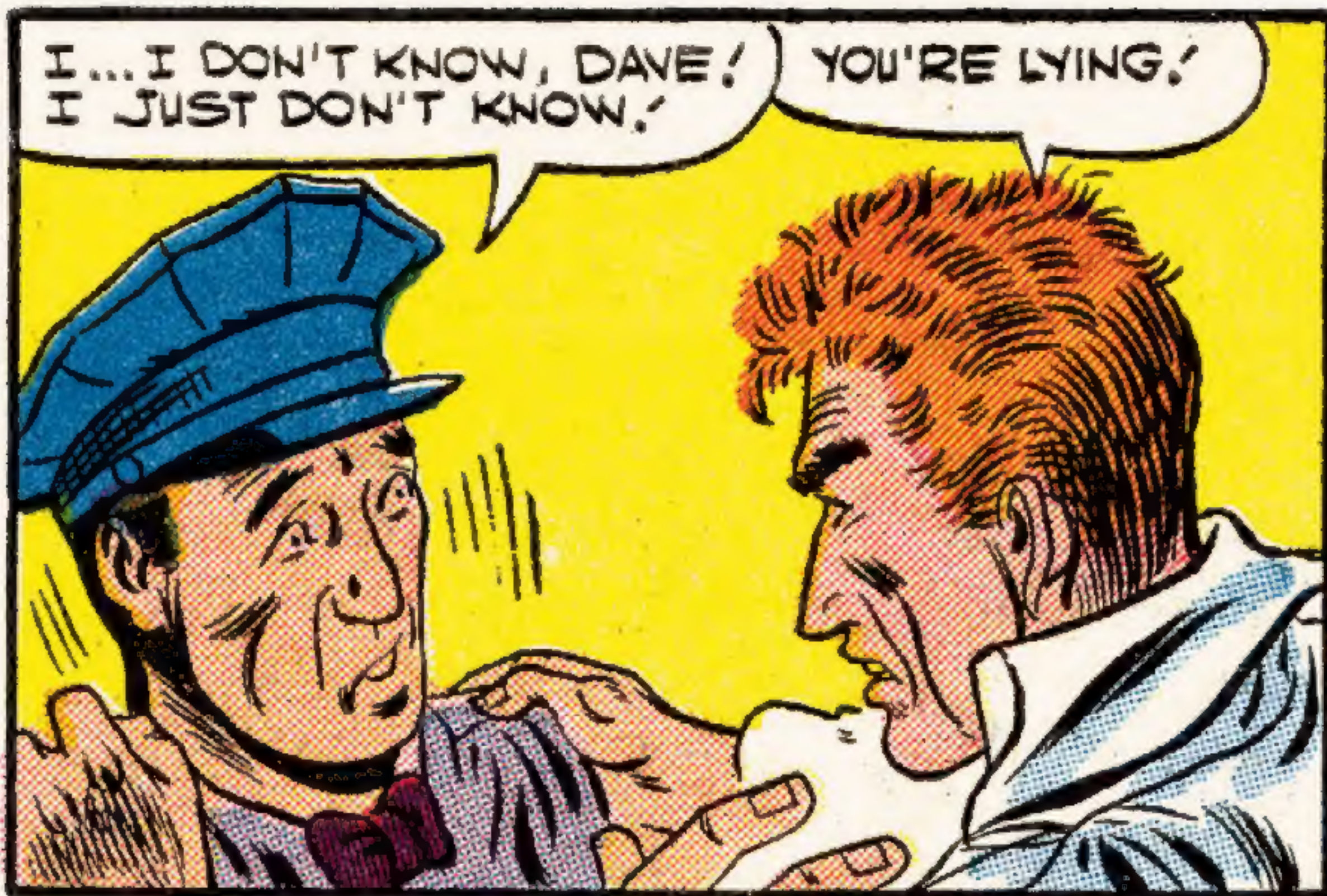
GASP!

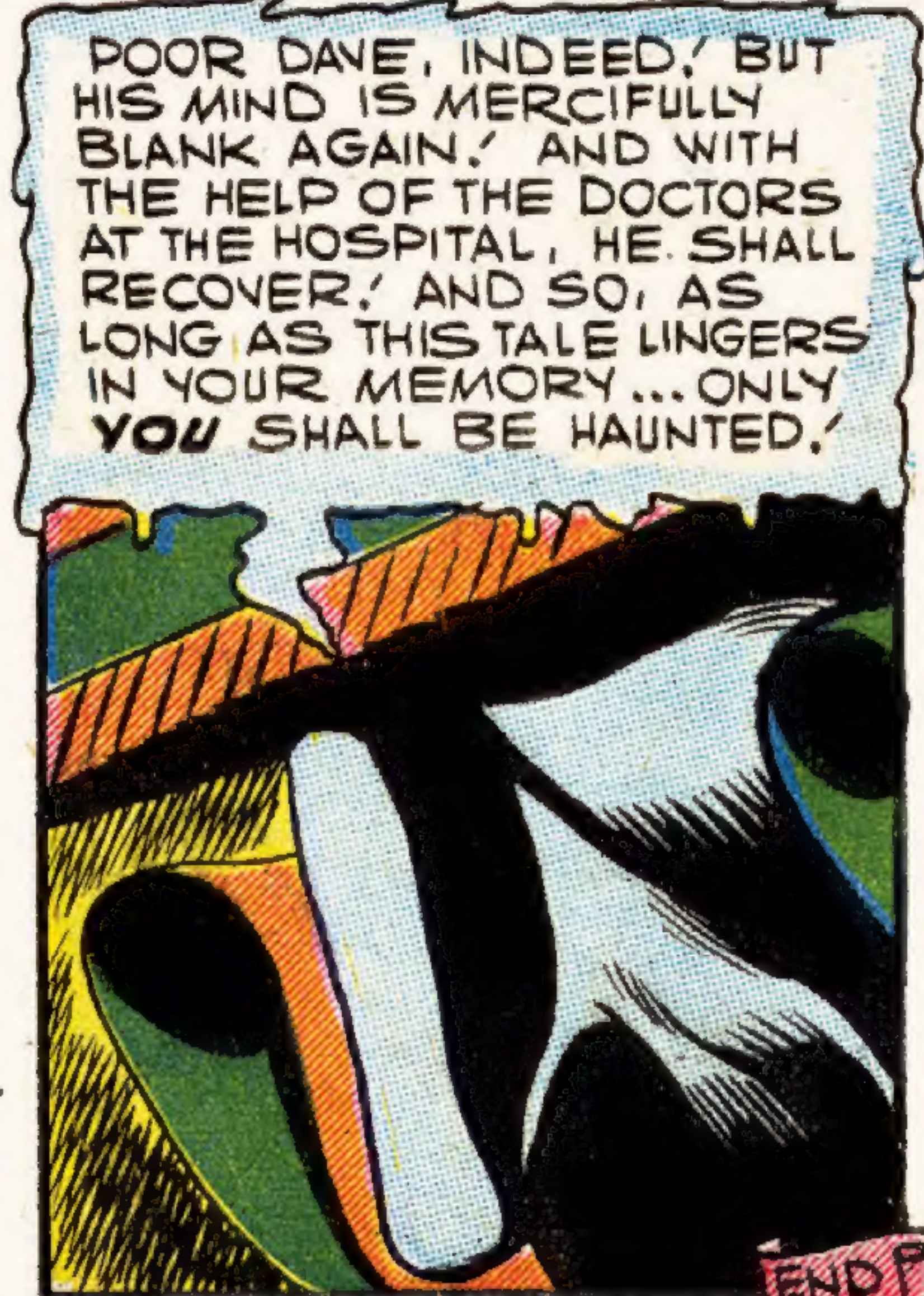
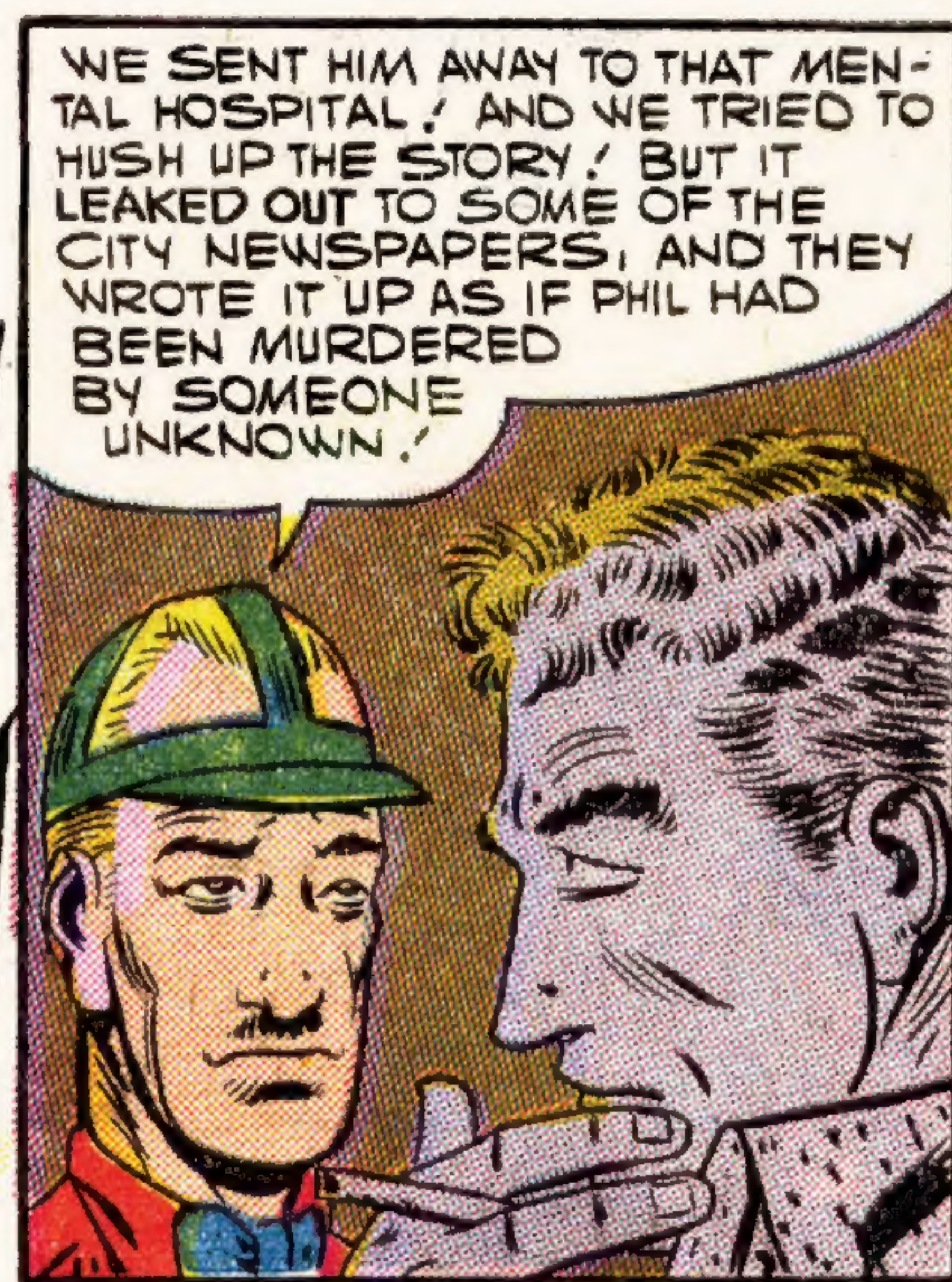
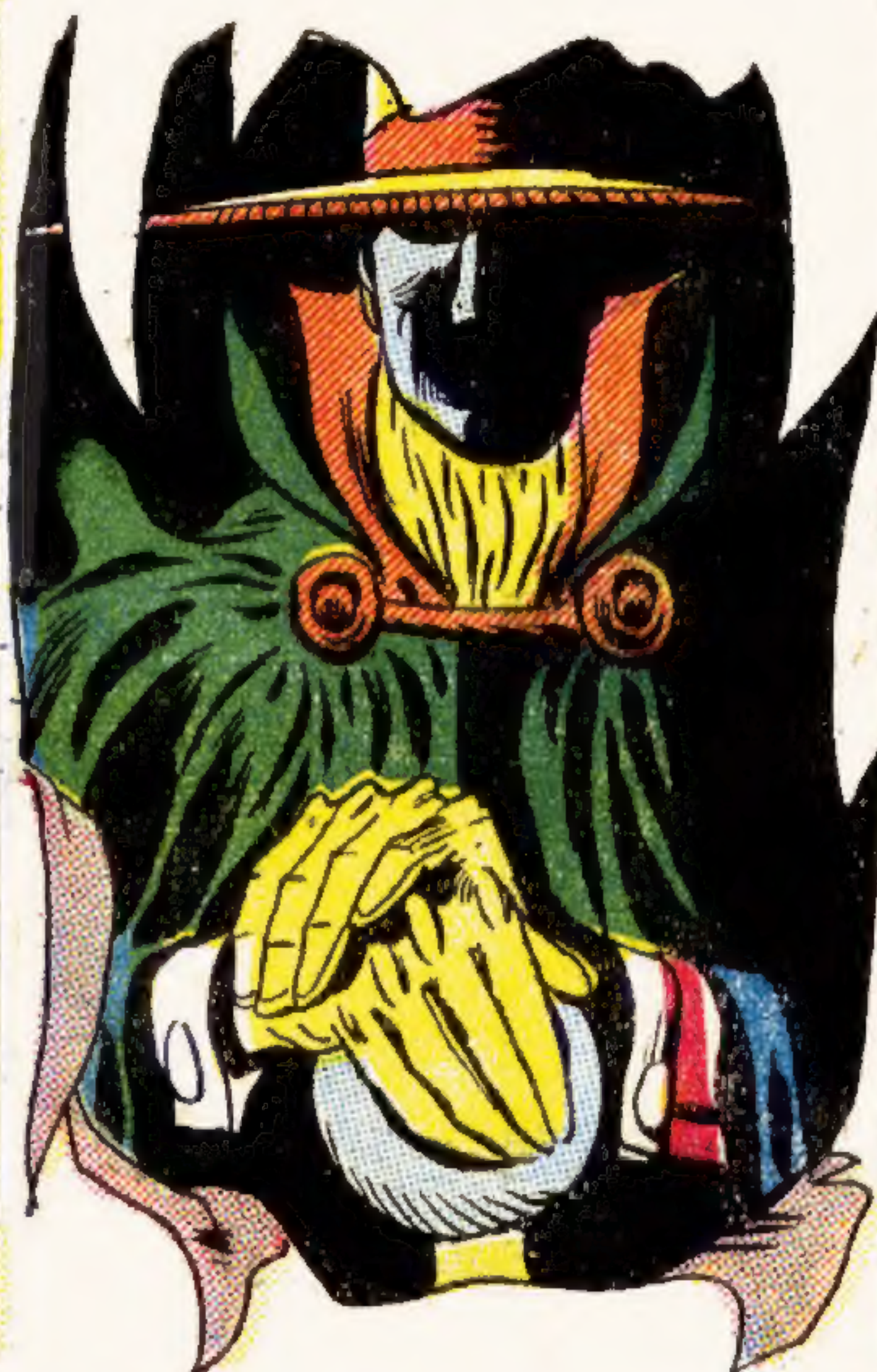


MORT, I'VE COME BACK! AREN'T YOU GLAD TO SEE ME? I'M BEEN SICK... BUT I'M BACK NOW. MORT, WHY DIDN'T ANYONE TELL ME THAT PHIL WAS KILLED?



EVERYBODY IN PLAINVILLE KNOWS THAT PHIL WAS MY BEST FRIEND. WHY DID I HAVE TO READ ABOUT HIS MURDER IN A BACK ISSUE OF A NEWSPAPER AT THE HOSPITAL? WHY, MORT, WHY?





This book is dedicated to my best friend, and son, Luke Bell. I would also like to thank everyone at Fantagraphics for continuing to spotlight Ditko's valuable legacy of pre-Spider-Man material. Many thanks, as well, to those who contributed to this project, including David L. Armstrong, Bob Bailey and Tom Hamilton. And a special tip of the pen to Steve Ditko whose wonderful legacy the world can continue to enjoy through these volumes. — B.B.

"...an ambitious series reprinting the early work of legendary comic-book artist Ditko... already display(s) Ditko's distinctively cockeyed style and his characteristically powerful compositions." —*Booklist*

In 1957, Steve Ditko may have been five years away from his involvement in the creation of the Amazing Spider-Man and Dr. Strange, but he was reaching the decade-long peak of his career while ensconced at Charlton Comics. Shortly before *The Twilight Zone* gripped the nation, Ditko's short, twist-ending morality plays presaged the format that Rod Serling's television show would make famous. *Mysterious Traveler: The Steve Ditko Archives* Vol. 3 collects for the first time over 200 pages of Ditko's best work of the 1950s — many would argue the best work of his career. With an introduction by series editor Blake Bell.

"Fantastic...
Raw and grotesque and
beautifully drawn
and presented."
— Dave
Gibbons

